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LILITH: THE MYTH AND THE MESSAGE

by

BARBARA RUTH REIMER

(C)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled Lilith: The Myth and the Message submitted by Barbara Ruth Reimer in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Date Jan. 13, 1977

DEDICATION

To Bob
whose ready encouragement,
practical assistance,
confidence and love
have left their mark
on every page.

Thank you.

Abstract

This discussion examines the position of the Lilith myth as an integral part of MacDonald's fantasy Lilith. The critical treatment of Lilith has neglected the importance of the original myth and its connection with MacDonald's message of repentance and spiritual development.

The characteristics of mythopoeism, allegory and parable in MacDonald's symbolic style, his attitudes toward the imagination, and his theories were shaped by many influences, especially the philosophies of Boehme, German romanticism, Calvinism and Darwinism. The resulting theory of spiritual evolution forms the basis of MacDonald's search for unity with the divine.

The Otherworld setting of MacDonald's fantasy reflects his skill in creating a believable secondary world which reinforces his theme through vivid antithetical imagery. Within this location he places characters who embody his message of repentance, involved in action which emphasizes development and spiritual evolution.

MacDonald chose to clothe his beliefs in fictional form because in that way he thought he could speak to a larger audience (or congregation). The genre of fantasy provided a wide range of movement and expression, and freedom of imaginative processes. Wishing to evoke all the mystery and wonder associated with the spiritual realm, MacDonald used the ancient

Lilith myth but enriched its personal meaning for himself (and for his readers) by linking it with the Christian emphasis on repentance and spiritual growth.

The life/death inversion--the death of self to awake into spiritual life--was important to MacDonald throughout his literary career. His first fantasy, Phantastes (1858), contains these thoughts:

> The very fact that anything can die, implies the existence of something that cannot die; which must either take to itself another form, as when the seed that is sown dies, and arises again; or, in conscious existence, may, perhaps, continue to lead a purely spiritual life.

Lilith (1895), his last fantasy, is the fullest expression of MacDonald's belief that man's progress is towards ultimate unity with his Creator once again.

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Barbara Ruth Reimer

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Introduction

The myth of Lilith, the first wife of Adam, evidently arose in order to explain the dual account of creation contained in Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:21-23.[1] The first passage presents the creation of male and female from one source in the image of God, which constitutes the collective "man" or mankind. Genesis 1:27 reads, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."[2] The second account in Genesis 2:7, 21-23, familiar through tradition and the aetiology of the Fall, records Adam's creation from dust and Eve's subsequent creation from his body.

> And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.
> . . . . . .
> And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;
> And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.
> And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Orthodox Christianity customarily accepts that the two accounts refer to one single act of creation; the second is considered an amplified version of the first. However, the

[1] This supposition seems generally accepted in the scholarship on the myth. Cf. Gershom Scholem, On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism (New York: Schocken, 1969), p.163.

[2] King James version (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, n.d.). All Biblical quotations are taken from this version.

Lilith myth is familiar through its Jewish tradition, and finds expression in a variety of writings.

In his exhaustive study, The Legends of the Jews, Louis Ginzberg has compiled this summary of the Lilith myth from original Hebrew sources:

> To banish his loneliness, Lilith was first given to Adam as wife. Like him she had been created out of the dust of the ground. But she remained with him only a short time, because she insisted upon enjoying full equality with her husband. She derived her rights from their identical origin. With the help of the Ineffable Name,[3] which she pronounced, Lilith flew away from Adam, and vanished in the air. Adam complained before God that the wife He had given him had deserted him, and God sent forth three angels to capture her. They found her in the Red Sea, and they sought to make her go back with the threat that, unless she went, she would lose a hundred of her demon children daily by death. But Lilith preferred this punishment to living with Adam. She takes her revenge by injuring babes--baby boys during the first night of their life, while baby girls are exposed to her wicked designs until they are twenty days old. The only way to ward off the evil is to attach an amulet bearing the names of her three angel captors to the children, for such had been the agreement between them.[4]

This myth accounts for the two creation stories and also for the disappearance of Lilith. The prior independent creation of Lilith and her subsequent escape from the Garden given in the Jewish myth allows, then, for the later formation of Eve from Adam's rib, in an indissoluble union joining "like unto like."

Richard Reis, in his brief discussion of the original myth,

[3]The Hebrew name for God was Yahweh, often written in abbreviated form and considered too sacred to be uttered.

[4]Louis Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1947), I, 65-66.

states that "since Lilith never ate the forbidden fruit, she was never subject to death; she became an immortal spirit, the perpetual enemy of the children of Eve."[5] Lilith's immortality is a significant element in the thematic structure of Lilith.

The only reference to Lilith herself in Scripture is found in the Hebrew text of Isaiah 34:14, but translations have obscured the use of her name by substituting words such as 'demon' or 'night-hag'. It is translated "screech owl" in the King James version.

Early Judaism did not allow for a duality of good and evil, for the omnipotence of God reduced or negated the importance of demonic forces.[6] Through outside influences and the animistic notions of such peoples as the Assyrians, the Jews gradually developed a collection of legends concerning demons and evil spirits (recorded in the Kabbalah).[7]

There are long and involved accounts of the descent of the Lilith figure from Assryo-Babylonian demonology. The best comparative discussion of such figures is given by Stephen

[5]Richard Reis, George MacDonald, Twayne English Author Series, 119 (New York: Twayne, 1972), p.99.

[6]Cf. Philip Birnbaum, A Book of Jewish Concepts (New York: Hebrew Publishing, 1964), p.583.

[7]The Kabbalah (or Cabbala) of Jewish holy writings is the body of mystical interpretation of the Old Testament, especially the Pentateuch, and the collection of tales and legends outside the accepted Scriptures.

Herbert Langdon in his volume on Semitic mythology in The Mythology of All Races.[8] I shall not repeat here his analysis and documentation of intricate connections and name developments, but will indicate some of the forerunners of the composite Lilith who emerged from Jewish tradition.

According to Langdon, Lilith inherits her position as seductress from the Babylonian demoness Lilîtu or Ardat Lilî, one of the twelve demons responsible for disease, pestilence, and death.[9] A symbol of sensual lust and sexual temptation in Kabbalistic literature, Lilith's influence on masturbation and homosexuality is developed in the Zohar.[10] She inherits her child-slaying characteristic from the Babylonian Lamashtu - and from the "child-snatching" Lamia of Sumerian demonology. Alû and Gallû are other names for a Lilith figure in Greek writings which represent Gallû as an image of the vampire Empousa.

Agrat Bat Mahalat, the Queen of Demons who slays newborn infants in Talmudic legend, is identified with Lilith by some scholars.[11] Seeking to harm all living creatures, she controls

[8]Canon John Arnott MacCulloch, gen. ed., The Mythology of All Races, 13 vols. (New York: Cooper Square, 1964), vol. 5: Semitic, by Stephen Herbert Langdon.

[9]Ibid, pp.361-62.

[10]Scholem, p.154.

[11]R.J. Zwi Werblowsky and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., The Encyclopedia of Jewish Religion (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966), p.113.

180,000 angels of destruction who are her children by Adam; Satan rules over all the demons. She is active on Sabbath eve and on Wednesday, existing until the "messianic era."

The account of incantations used against the demoness Lamashtu to ward off and prevent her malevolent activity is similar to that in the Jewish records. Langdon comments:

> The Jewish treatises on magic to prevent the wicked machinations of demons, and the multitude of bowls with Aramaic, Mandaic, and Jewish charms, directed principally against the horrible demoness Lîlîth, constitute a great literature in the history of Judaism in all lands and in all periods to the present day.[12]

Besides recording various charms and mystical incantations, he recounts the following legend from Semitic mythology:

> Elijah the prophet met the wicked Lîlîth on the road and asked her where she was going, calling her "thou foul one, spirit of foulness." She confessed that she was seeking the house of a woman in child-birth to suck the marrow of the child's bones, to devour his flesh. Elijah restrained her in the name of Y(āw), and she appealed to him not to ban her in the name of Y(āw), God of Israel. She told him that if they repeated her names, or if she saw her names written, she and her whole band would have no power over that place. She gave fifteen names . . .[13]

The Lilith myth has been used by different authors for as many different purposes. In the nineteenth century it came to the fore as an image of the 'femme fatale', and as an expression of feminine power in an age interested in women like Nimue, Vivian, Guenivere, and Isolt from Arthurian tradition. Writers concerned with occultism, mysticism, magic, and

[12] Langdon, p.353.

[13] Ibid, p.363. Note the abbreviation of Yahweh.

demonology, as well as those involved with the liberation of women, have found the Lilith myth suitable for their purposes.

Nineteenth century mores presented a split view of womanhood: on one side stood the paragon of virtue, inspiring worship in the chivalric tradition; on the other stood the sensuous and adulterous harlot, waiting to trap the unwary.[14] This division tended to maintain extremes rather than to create a composite female character. In discussing "la belle dame sans merci" in The Romantic Agony, Mario Praz emphasizes that such mythological and literary figures are reflections of the "arrogant and cruel female characters" found in life.[15] After following the development of this type through the Romantic period, and indicating the influences of exoticism and mysticism upon it, Praz suggests an affinity between the two forces:

> But between the mystic who denies the world of the senses and the exoticist who affirms its existence, between the mystic who empties his universe of all material content and the exoticist who invests remote periods and distant countries with the vibration of his own senses and materializes them in his imagination, there is certainly a similarity of purpose; both transfer the fulfilment of their desires to an ideal, a dream world . . .[16]

Both the Pre-Raphaelites and the French Symbolists concentrated on such female figures. The Symbolists' romantic search for ultimate experience, Rossetti's "preference for the

[14] Cf. W.E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind: 1830-1870 (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1957), pp.365-68.

[15] Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p.199.

[16] Ibid, p.211.

sad and cruel,"[17] and the martyrdom of Swinburne's passive male victim are all examples of the continuing tradition of the cruel, fatal woman.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poem, "Eden Bower," uses the Lilith myth, and his painting "Lilith" is an excellent attempt to capture the essence of the 'femme fatale'. Keats's poem, "Lamia," concerns the Sumerian demoness from whom Lilith descends in mythological tradition. Remy de Gourmont (1858-1915), a French symbolist, wrote Lilith: a play (1892) to portray Lilith as a seductress.[18] His book is especially useful for its bibliography of the texts upon which he based his treatment. Treatments vary in their degrees of adherence to the original myth, and take from it whatever they find applicable to their needs.[19]

George MacDonald's Lilith is gradually receiving more critical attention. As interest in symbolic literature grows, Victorian fantasy is experiencing renewed analysis, and MacDonald's imaginative fiction is achieving prominence again.

[17] Praz, p.228.

[18] Remy de Gourmont, Lilith: a play (1892; rpt. Boston: John W. Luce, 1946).

[19] Twentieth century literature also uses the myth. Cf. Geroge Sterling, Lilith: a dramatic poem (New York: Macmillan, 1926) emphasizing the sexual lure of Lilith; Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth, Lilith: a novel (New York: A.L. Bert, 1909); Robert Rossen's screenplay Lilith (Centuar Production/ Columbia Pictures Corp., 1964) centering upon the element of demonic possession. In addition, James Joyce mentions Lilith twice in Ulysses and C.S. Lewis, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1952) makes the Witch Lilith's descendant.

Lilith had an interesting history of composition, reflecting the seriousness with which MacDonald regarded his message of spiritual growth and his desire for unity of idea and symbolic expression. Robert L. Wolff has examined the six pre-publication versions, which progress from a bound notebook dated 28 March 1890, to the final typescript, and notes that the major changes occur between the first version and the succeeding ones.[20] Also commenting on the difference between the original text and the revisions, Richard Reis emphasizes the unusual care MacDonald took with this book:

> Of the other MacDonald manuscripts I have examined, none even approaches the complexity and the evidence of long labor obvious upon even a brief glance at this one. MacDonald knew that he was making his definitive statement, not merely grinding out another nearly negligible addition to the immense corpus of his work.[21]

Of Lilith's first writing in 1890, Greville MacDonald states:

> He was possessed by a feeling--he would hardly let me call it a conviction, I think--that it was a mandate direct from God, for which he himself was to find form and clothing; and he set about its transcription in tranquillity. Its first writing is unlike anything else he ever did. It runs from page to page, with few breaks into new paragraphs, with little punctuation, with scarcely a word altered, and in a handwriting freer perhaps than most of his, yet with the same beautiful legibility. The mandate thus embodied in symbolic forms, over which he did not ponder, he then gave it more correct array: . . .[22]

[20] Robert Lee Wolff, The Golden Key: A Study of the Fiction of George MacDonald (New Haven: Yale Univ, Press, 1961), p.329.

[21] Reis, pp.94-95.

[22] Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and his Wife (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1924), p.548. Hereafter cited as GMDW.

Upon reading the manuscript, MacDonald's wife, Louisa, feared that the novel would be taken as a sign of waning power rather than as a work of genius, thus damaging her husband's reputation.[23] Her opinion caused MacDonald great distress. However, when the decision whether or not to publish the work was left to the judgement of their son, Greville, the young man saw it as a masterpiece and urged its publication.

Any work which caused varied reactions in MacDonald's own family might be expected to provoke both praise and condemnation in scholastic criticism. Lilith has had a wide range of critical judgements passed upon it.

The most damaging statement, attacking content and style and claiming that the book is evidence of MacDonald's morbid psychological state, comes from R.L. Wolff's study of his fiction. Wolff declares:

> Perhaps Louisa MacDonald was right in her instinctive feeling that it would have been better for her husband's reputation had Lilith not been printed. One might forgive its cruelty, its ugliness, its irresponsibility, its brooding depression, if one could feel with Child that the images had inexhaustible meaning, and that the author kept the story moving. Close reading of Lilith has convinced me instead that, despite powerful and occasionally moving passages, it is feeble, ambiguous, and inconsistent in its imagery, full of senile hatreds and resentments, and the most violent in its aggressions of all MacDonald's works. The consolations that it professes to offer seem to have lost their meaning for the author himself.[24]

[23] GMDW, pp.546-55.

[24] Wolff, p.332.

These are strong charges that have been countered in other criticism which removes MacDonald from the narrow confines of Freudian analysis alone. MacDonald's own answer to Wolff would perhaps be that a man imagines not "what he pleases, but what he can. If he be not a true man, he will draw evil out of the best; we need not mind how he treats any work of art!"[25]

Wolff's comment upon the opinion of Child refers to an article praising both MacDonald's imagination and his craft:

> The story is so packed with meaning, so full of images of which the meanings seem inexhaustible, that it is marvellous to see how George MacDonald keeps it, as a story, moving, and is ever ready with some new and strange vehicle of beautiful or grotesque or horrible imagination. But nothing in the craft of the book comes up to the simplicity of the last breaking down and surrender of the Princess of evil. Only a strong mind and a sure artist could have dared and achieved that bareness.[26]

These two quotations express the diverse reactions to Lilith.

In his study, Richard Reis examines the full-length adult fantasies Phantastes and Lilith, and sees in them the "fullest realization" of MacDonald's symbolic techniques.[27] Although he concludes that MacDonald deserves secondary rank as an artist because such faults as "sentimentality," "verbosity," and

[25] George MacDonald, "The Fantastic Imagination," A Dish of Orts: Chiefly Papers on the Imagination and on Shakespeare (London: Edwin Dalton, 1908), p.320. Further references to MacDonald's essays will be footnoted with the abbreviated title Orts and the page number.

[26] Harold Child, Times Literary Supplement, 29 May 1924, p.329.

[27] Reis, pp.86-102.

"preachiness" mar the fantasies as well as the "realistic" fiction, Reis admires MacDonald's skill in creating symbolic fantasy.[28] He judges Lilith as MacDonald's masterpiece, praising the novel as "tightly constructed," and finer than the author's other works in its "excitement, symbolic resonance, and psychological truth."[29]

Although the scholarship on MacDonald's Lilith has concentrated on psychological motivation, sources, stylistic techniques and summary, it has neglected to question his purpose in choosing the Jewish myth for thematic scaffolding or to examine the significant changes MacDonald introduces. The myth is an integral part of his message, and requires more than a passing reference to its presence.

In Lilith, MacDonald adheres closely to the myth; he retains the basic story, Lilith's name, history and relation to Adam, and many of her traditional characteristics. But in MacDonald's fantasy the myth receives amplification and significance far beyond its basic structure; he uses the details from the Jewish background, and enriches them by his original addition of Lilith's repentance. Yet more important than the exercise of creative expression are the reasons and purposes behind his inventive use of the basic myth. MacDonald adapted the Lilith myth for his symbolic fantasy: his treatment reveals

[28] Reis, p.142.

[29] Ibid, p.29.

his message. His themes are repentance and conversion as the only way to achieve oneness with God, and spiritual evolution as the path to discernment.

Although critics such as Reis and Wolff place Lilith in the tradition of the picaresque or "chain-adventure story,"[30] a series of unrelated adventures through which the hero passes unchanged in character, I disagree with this classification, arguing that MacDonald presents a development in his hero's awareness by educating him through his experiences, a process in harmony with a theory of spiritual evolution. As a result of Otherworld visits, Vane gradually understands the concepts of freedom, individuality, and unity, and confronts the necessity for repentance and the death of self in order to experience spiritual life.

After discussing some of the influences upon MacDonald's message of spiritual evolution as it is expressed in Lilith and upon his symbolic style, we shall examine the fictional Otherworld MacDonald has created. Then we shall focus our attention upon Lilith, concentrating on the development in Lilith and Vane. The changes which take place in Lilith are essential, but Vane also is crucial to our examination; through his eyes, his experiences, and his education by Raven MacDonald presents the issues and informs the reader. Terms such as "repentance," "loss of self," and "die to life" will occur

[30]Reis, p.105.

repeatedly in this discussion; the possible significances of some of MacDonald's symbols will emerge but, as we must constantly remember, these are not algebraic equivalents. Other meanings are not only possible but desirable in order that everyone may comprehend the message. The entire paradox of life through death, with which MacDonald was working, will be examined.

There is great difficulty in presenting clearly the life/death inversion in Lilith, as there is in any issue where the meanings of words are reversed. Essentially there are two levels of life and death: natural and spiritual. If you hold onto physical life, you cannot obtain spiritual, everlasting life, and die a "spiritual" death, for your desires remain earth-bound. If, on the other hand, you are willing to experience a "death" of your natural desires--to forego them for something greater--you reach a higher level of life, on a spiritual plane. In Art and Poetry Jacques Maritain expresses the dichotomy in these words:

> That is why mystical language knows only two terms: life according to the senses and life according to the spirit; those who sleep in their senses and those who wake in the Holy Spirit. Because there are for us only two fountain-heads: the senses and the Spirit of God.
> Man has a spiritual soul, but which informs a body. If it be a question of passing to a life wholly spiritual, his reason does not suffice; his tentatives toward angelism always fail. His only authentic spirituality is bound to grace and to the Holy Spirit.[31]

Physical life alone leads to spiritual death; a figurative

[31] Jacques Maritain, Art and Poetry (New York: Philosophical Library, 1943), pp.47-48.

death of earthly concerns develops spiritual life. Physical death is not an issue in MacDonald's statement of this paradox.

To the Lilith myth's concept of individuality and self-government, MacDonald adds Lilith's repentance essentially to parallel similar changes in Vane. As we follow Vane's development under the instruction of Raven (Adam) and the others, and watch Lilith's dramatic move toward relinquishing self, we hear MacDonald's voice in the background, working with language and symbol to teach that we must forsake our tenacious hold on ourselves, give up the desire to control our own lives and destinies, and place ourselves willingly within God's plan and purpose. Dramatically and symbolically, MacDonald argues the death of self for true individual life, re-echoing the words of Jesus: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:25).

Chapter I: The Shaping of the Message

The term 'mythopoeic', applied to MacDonald's particular quality of symbolic writing by such critics as C.S. Lewis, G.K. Chesterton and W.H. Auden, indicates that it embodies an idea or concern which is important to all mankind: to create a "myth" for humanity expressing the fundamentals of human existence. This nebulous characteristic, a blend of allegorical and mythic techniques developing the timeless and universal quality of myth, eludes precise definition, although Lewis labored to describe it in his introduction to Phantastes and Lilith.[32] Speaking of MacDonald as the "supreme fantasist," who hovered between the allegorical and mythopoeic, Lewis uses the term "beyond expression" to describe MacDonald's ability to create, with mythic art, emotional sensations outside our normal mode of consciousness. One thing remains clear: no matter what characteristics together create this mythopoeic writing, it has an unmistakable and deeply moving effect upon those to whom the myth speaks and by whom it is understood.

There is an element of allegory in MacDonald's fiction; literature working in a symbolic vein with didactic purpose usually involves some allegorical content and structure. In Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode, Angus Fletcher cites Goethe's distinction between allegory and symbol:

[32] C.S. Lewis, Introduction to Phantastes and Lilith, by George MacDonald (London: Victor Gollancz, 1962).

> Allegory changes a phenomenon into a concept, a concept into an image, but in such a way that the concept is still limited and completely kept and held in the image and expressed by it (whereas symbolism) changes the phenomenon into the idea, the idea into the Image, in such a way that the idea remains always infinitely active and unapproachable in the image, and will remain inexpressible even though expressed in all languages.[33]

Allegory, therefore, contains a "fixated" element, a level of meaning capable of correlation with another yet distinct from it; symbolism, broader and less definite, does not require the "two attitudes of mind" implicit in allegory. However, Fletcher asserts, allegory need not be a full equation: analogies are, by nature, essentially incomplete.[34] Also, allegorists may not desire the full comprehension associated with allegory.[35]

MacDonald constantly maintains a loose allegorical structure without one-to-one correlation. R.L. Green, in his remarks concerning The Light Princess and Other Stories, pinpoints the particular attitude necessary when approaching MacDonald's symbolic work:

> In a way MacDonald's stories are allegories, just as The Pilgrim's Progress is: but, unlike the story of Christian's journey to the Shining City, we are not meant to be thinking all the time about what they mean --and certainly not to try to work out what each person or adventure stands for.[36]

[33] Angus Fletcher, Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode (New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1964), p.17

[34] Ibid, p.177.

[35] Ibid, p.72.

[36] Roger Lancelyn Green, Introduction to The Light Princess and Other Tales, by George MacDonald (London: Victor Gollancz, 1961), p.9.

It is unnecessary to "decode" MacDonald's symbols to reach a formulated meaning; MacDonald's direct statements usually reveal his intent. Recognizing in MacDonald's fiction a "systematic, consistent set of beliefs," Reis judges that "MacDonald's characteristic and most effective mode of intellectual or philosophical expression is through the suggestive, poetic, and impalpable language of symbol and myth."[37]

In contrast to Reis's perception of MacDonald's skill, Wolff, in The Golden Key, repeatedly charges MacDonald with ambiguity and inconsistency in his imagery;[38] however, such characteristics need not constitute a flaw, especially when an author is avoiding strict allegory. Multiple levels of meaning are, in Reis's opinion, evidence of symbolic writing: "Multiplicity and indefiniteness distinguish genuine symbolism from mere allegory."[39] Wolff, who wants to discover psychologically revealing symbol/meaning correlations, has sought for the exact "algebraic" equivalents MacDonald rejected. Although MacDonald pursued a symbolic method, and employed images to achieve his effect, he was wary of allegory, often striving for the very ambiguity which Wolff deplores. In his essays on the imagination, MacDonald reveals his attitude towards the meanings found in works of art and fantasy; he asserts that a "genuine work of art must mean many things; the

[37] Reis, p.31.

[38] Wolff, p.332.

[39] Reis, p.78.

truer its art, the more things it will mean."[40]

Believing that works of art are shaped by the "inspiration of the Almighty" and embody His thoughts in man's imperfect expression, MacDonald regards multiple meanings as evidence of the divine hand; one "difference between God's work and man's is, that, while God's work cannot mean more than he meant, man's must mean more than he meant."[41] MacDonald has very clear ideas about the purpose of "non-realistic" inventions: it is to serve the imagination, and this can only be accomplished if those inventions embody the Truth.[42] He does not provide a criterion to help the reader distinguish "the True" or the interpretation of that truth. Reis credits MacDonald with wisdom and insight in leaving his theory open-ended;[43] the interpretation of symbolic writing and the discovery of meanings in symbols is essentially a subjective activity, best left to the individual who will then find a meaning which corresponds to his level of development. In The Educated Imagination, Northrop Frye associates this freedom of imagination with the third "level of mind." He submits that interpretation in which anything can be possible encourages tolerance.[44]

[40] Orts, p.317

[41] Ibid, p.320.

[42] Ibid, p.22.

[43] Reis, p.50.

[44] Northrop Frye, The Educated Imagination, The Massey Lectures, Second Series (Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corp., 1963), p.32.

A variety of meanings, for MacDonald at least, is a sign of truth in a work of art and expands its range. Everyone "who feels the story, will read its meaning after his own nature and development: one will read one meaning in it, another will read another."[45] The waking of meaning is the important step; the amount of truth perceived depends upon the reader's inward condition. If the meanings are true, it matters not whether they were consciously intended. Most strict allegory is a "weariness to the spirit:" a "key" to an imaginative work is "absurd. The tale is there, not to hide, but to show: if it show nothing at your window, do not open your door to it; leave it out in the cold."[46]

Greville MacDonald summarizes most effectively MacDonald's attitude toward symbolism. In George MacDonald and his Wife, he records the trend of a conversation with his father, in words which reflect MacDonald's own style. His account demonstrates the pattern of thought, images, emphasis on "substance" and doctrine of progression which occupied MacDonald's thoughts.

> He would allow that the algebraic symbol, which concerns only the three-dimensioned, has no substantial relation to the unknown quantity; nor the "tree where it falleth" to the man unredeemed, the comparison being false. But the rose, when it gives some glimmer of the freedom for which a man hungers, does so because of its substantial unity with the man, each in degree being a signature of God's immanence. To a spiritual pilgrim the flower no longer seems a mere pretty design on the veil, "the cloak and cloud that shadows me from Thee"; for see! she opens

[45] Orts, p.316.

[46] Ibid, p.321.

> her wicket into the land of poetic reality and he passing through and looking gratefully back, then knows her for his sister the Rose, of spiritual substance one with himself. So may even a gem, giving from its heart reflections of heavenly glory, awaken like memory in ourselves and send our eyes upwards. So also may we find co-substance between the stairs of a cathedral spire and our own "secret stair" up to the wider vision --the faculty of defying the "plumb-line of gravity" being the common and imaginative heritage.[47]

For MacDonald, "a symbol was far more than an arbitrary outward and visible sign of an abstract conception: its higher value lay in a common substance with the idea presented."[48] The ability of a specific symbol to reflect a deeper reality, with which it shares an ultimate unity, makes it an appropriate symbol. And the spiritual substance is of primary importance because it exists beyond the physical. An individual may pass through the symbol and, "looking gratefully back" with increased awareness, perceive unity between himself and that object. The direction upwards implied by the stair imagery (one of MacDonald's favorite symbols) and the disregard for gravity signify that one rises from his "earth-bound" position to a higher spiritual level through this perception. This is our "imaginative heritage."

As well as being a symbolic writer, MacDonald was a writer of parable. Louis MacNeice, in Varieties of Parable,[49] selects MacDonald as a prime example of the mythopoeic

[47] GMDW, p.482.

[48] Ibid, pp.481-82.

[49] Louis MacNeice, Varieties of Parable (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1965.

parabolist: the maker of myths. One familiar with MacDonald's contents and style need only glance at MacNeice's conclusions concerning parabolic writing to see how completely MacDonald fulfils the requirements--creation of a special world true to the inner reality of man, developing a strong spiritual element; concern with identity; dreamlike method and transportations; coalescence of theme and story with Everyman as hero; appropriateness of a poetic procedure; desire to create a work of "the order of Imagination rather than of mere Fancy," involving the author's deepest feelings and beliefs.[50] This element of belief embodied in writing especially identifies MacDonald as a parabolic writer with a "passionately spiritual attitude to the universe;" like other parabolists, his stories involve "very serious moral issues which are contingent not on Law but on Grace."[51]

MacDonald's interest is the spiritual nature of man; his belief is in that nature's development beyond its mundane dimensions to greater unity with God. To that effect he deploys his images to produce, in varying degrees, greater insight into man's relationship to God. MacNeice stresses the integral connection between belief and parabolic presentation:

> All MacDonald's fantasies are spiritual explorations, and he could not have written them, and more than Bunyan could have written Pilgrim's Progress, if he had not held certain beliefs. The orthodox Christian belief

[50] MacNeice, p.96.

[51] Ibid, p.97.

> in personal immortality is complicated in him by an individual and mystical vision of a universe which can only be understood by the assumption of extra dimensions, a universe where, regardless of time and space, two or more worlds are continually superimposed. This special vision MacDonald, like the mystical poets, could only attempt to convey through physical imagery, but with him, as his son pointed out, it is essential to remember that such images are never mere algebraic symbols.[52]

MacNeice's final contention is that "a religious theme, when it gets into literature, requires some sort of parable form."[53] Limitations of language emerge in any expression of spiritual import because the words, familiar to us, are inadequate to convey anything beyond our three-dimensional[54] experience. Nevertheless, these language forms are our only means of recording spiritual discovery. As C.S. Lewis says in Mere Christianity concerning the difficulty of understanding Christian writings, "Christianity claims to be telling us about another world, about something beyond the world we can touch and hear and see."[55]

In one of his sermons, MacDonald emphasizes that God Himself moves the soul by the power of suggestion in parables:

> The Lord puts things in subdefined, suggestive shapes, yielding no satisfactory meaning to the mere intellect. . . . According as the new creation, that of reality, advances in him, the man becomes able to understand the words, the symbols, the parables of the Lord.[56]

[52] MacNeice, p.119.

[53] Ibid, p.97.

[54] omitting the fourth dimension of time.

[55] C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1952), p.123.

[56] Reis, p.30.

Thus the symbolic writer, the speaker of parables, in attempting to move man towards God through suggestion, is following His example. By using his imagination for this purpose of divine unity, the writer employs God's gift as He intended.

> But while the imagination of man has thus the divine function of putting thought into form, it has a duty altogether human, which is paramount to that function--the duty, namely, which springs from his immediate relation to the Father, that of following and finding out the divine imagination in whose image it was made.[57]

Just as God works symbolically to affect man and to awaken him spiritually, the imagination functions in a similar fashion.

> In very truth, a wise imagination, which is the presence of the spirit of God, is the best guide that man or woman can have; for it is not the things we see the most clearly that influence us the most powerfully; undefined, yet vivid visions of something beyond, something eye has not seen nor ear heard, have far more influence than any logical sequences whereby the same things may be demonstrated to the intellect. It is the nature of the thing, not the clearness of its outline, that determines its operation. We live by faith, and not by sight.[58]

Pursuing a deeper reality, the imagination surpasses the limit of logical pursuasion because it works emotionally, through symbols with multiple meanings. MacDonald propels his reader towards that reality, not by intellectual impetus but by symbolic suggestion and an inward evolution toward God. Analyzing methodology, he clearly defines his objectives and aims:

> If a writer's aim be logical conviction, he must spare no logical pains, not merely to be understood, but to escape being misunderstood; where his object is to move

[57] Orts, p.10.

[58] Ibid, p.28.

> by suggestion, to cause to imagine, then let him assail the soul of his reader as the wind assails an aeolian harp. If there be music in my reader, I would gladly wake it.[59]

Although logical conviction and movement by suggestion may not be separated completely in MacDonald's work, his evident primary concern is to move mankind and to ensure that the movement is progression, not regression.[60] MacDonald, in suggesting the infinite and indefinable, strives to elucidate his themes through constant repetition of his images and symbols. He is willing to risk being misunderstood by those who cannot yet understand.

Though the sources of MacDonald's theory of spiritual evolution are many, the major ones are Jacob Boehme, the schools of German romanticism and natural philosophy, the Calvinist doctrine of the elect, and the evolutionary theory of Darwin.

MacDonald's belief that all nature expresses God's thoughts reflects both his immersion in the writings of the mystics who upheld this medieval idea[61] and his own view of unity in the

[59] Orts, p.321.

[60] Cf. George MacDonald, The Princess and Curdie (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1908), pp.238, 253 and the significance of Lena and the Uglies as human beings who have regressed into grotesque bodies and are gradually progressing towards human form again. This is a physical manifestation of MacDonald's theory of spiritual evolution, expressed in images conprehensible to children.

[61] Cf. Rosamond Tuve, Allegorical Imagery: Some Mediaeval Books and Their Posterity. (Princeton:Princeton Univ. Press, 1966), pp.268-71 for a reversal of this customary view.

natural and spiritual worlds. Accompanying Boehme's influence is the postulate of Emmanuel Swedenborg: "The whole natural world corresponds to the spiritual world, and not merely the natural world in general, but also every particular of it."[62] These correspondences are not readily apparent, however; the forms which embody God's thought yield greater dividends as man proceeds in his quest for the divine.

MacDonald was well acquainted with religious mysticism. His emphasis on growing discernment and higher cognition through nature echoes the sixteenth century belief that God is hidden in nature; man's duty is to find Him there. This duty corresponds to MacDonald's view of the imagination's function. The new emphasis on personal religious experience and inward regeneration was epitomized by Martin Luther's doctrine of justification by faith which, according to John Joseph Stoudt, was "a protective argument for a precious religious insight--the Pauline view that in Christ all things become new."[63] This doctrine finds expression in MacDonald's writings as well, although his characters also actively pursue their salvation, developing significantly in the process.

In his essay, "A Sketch of Individual Development,"[64] MacDonald records the stages of spiritual education through

[62] Reis, p.38.

[63] John Joseph Stoudt, Jacob Boehme: His Life and Thought (New York: Seabury, 1968), p.29.

[64] also found in Orts.

which a mystic progresses toward union with God--from conversion or 'awakening', through purgation, illumination, and surrender, to final union. This is but another account of the spiritual instruction given in The Cloud of Unknowing,[65] a devotional classic by a fourteenth century mystic as a guide for a 'disciple' considering the contemplative life. Outlining the way, it emphasizes the inadequacy of language to express the final mystical union, even as MacDonald, in his theory of spiritual progress, cannot express what is beyond expression. This is, of course, the definition of 'mystical'.

Evelyn Underhill, in The Mystics of the Church, stresses the active element in mysticism:

> I would prefer to call it [mysticism] "the life which aims at union with God." These terms--life, aim, union --suggest its active and purposive character; the fact that true Christian mysticism is neither a philosophic theory nor a name for delightful religious sensations, but that it is a life with an aim, and this aim is nothing less than the union of man's spirit with the very Heart of the Universe.[66]

It is this impulse toward action as the result of experience which directs MacDonald's attempts.

MacDonald's beliefs reflect the language and literature of the mystics and his kinship with their mode of thought. As Reis asserts, the "strong infusion of mysticism in his outlook led him to flirt with the uncontrovertible position of the

[65] Anon., The Cloud of Unknowing, trans. Ira Progoff (New York: Julian, 1957).

[66] Evelyn Underhill, The Mystics of the Church (New York: Schocken, 1964), p.20.

typical mystic that he has received knowledge through inspiration, directly from God, including insights which had been 'left out' of the Bible."[67] If we can judge from his son's account,[68] MacDonald approached the composition of Lilith in this mystical frame of mind. However we may regard his "heretical" and unorthodox beliefs, they suggest that his personal creed was influenced by a perception of inspiration and not bound to Scripture.[60]

As a clergyman, MacDonald was no doubt immersed in the Christian mysticism of Augustine and Thomas à Kempis during his training. Jacob Boehme, who focused upon dimensional levels in the life of man, continued in this tradition.

Greville MacDonald and R.L. Wolff emphasize the quotation from Thoreau's "Walking" which served as an epigraph to Lilith because of its concern with multiple dimensions.

[67] Reis, p.33.

[68] GMDW, p.548. See p.8 of this thesis.

[69] MacDonald, a Congregationalist minister, joined the liberal faction of the Church of England after associating with the "broad church" movement through F.D. Maurice. For discussions of this movement, which attempted to encompass a wide range of doctrine, see J.B. Schneewind, Backgrounds of English Victorian Literature (New York: Random House, 1970), pp.62-64, and W.E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind: 1830-1870 (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1957), pp.48-49, 418. The liberal faction of this "intellectually progressive" group believed, as Reis summarizes (p.32), that the Bible was primarily an historical document written by "fallible men capable of distortion and misrepresentations" of the words of Jesus and that many passages "must be taken figuratively rather than literally." It is obvious that such a view would find disfavor with orthodox Christians believing in the literal verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture.

> I took a walk on Spaulding's Farm the other afternoon. I saw the setting sun lighting up the opposite side of a stately pine wood. Its golden rays straggled into the aisles of the wood as into some noble hall. I was impressed as if some ancient and altogether admirable and shining family had settled there in that part of the land called Concord, unknown to me, . . . Their house was not obvious to vision; the trees grew through it. I do not know whether I heard the sounds of a suppressed hilarity or not. They seemed to recline on the sunbeams. . . . Nothing can equal the serenity of their lives. Their coat of arms is simply a lichen. I saw it painted on the pines and oaks. Their attics were in the tops of the trees. They are of no politics. There was no noise of labor. I did not perceive that they were weaving or spinning. Yet I did detect, when the wind lulled and hearing was done away, the finest imaginable sweet musical hum,--as of a distant hive in May, which perchance was the sound of their thinking. . . .
>
> But I find it difficult to remember them. They fade irrevocably out of my mind even now while I speak and endeavor to recall them, and recollect myself. . . .[70]

The lengthy passage concerns the dimensions beyond those in the natural world, through which a man gains perceptions of greater unity and meaning than he ordinarily glimpses.[71] The concept of seven dimensions--the addition of four spiritual ones--MacDonald derived from the writings of Jacob Boehme (1575-

[70]Henry David Thoreau, "Walking," Excusions (1863; rpt. New York: Corinth, 1962), pp.207-09.

[71]Multiple dimensions have interested men since Claudius Ptolemy first discussed the number of dimensions in space while establishing his "Ptolemaic System." Dr. Florian Cajori, A History of Mathematics (New York: Macmillan, 1961), pp.183-84 cites John Wallis, a seventeenth century mathematician, concerning "the possibility of a fourth dimension. Whereas nature, says Wallis, 'doth not admit of more than three (local) dimensions . . . it may justly seem very improper to talk of a solid . . . drawn into a fourth, fifth, sixth or further dimensions. . . . Nor can our fansie imagine how there should be a fourth local dimension beyond these three.'"

1624).[72]

The dimensions which MacDonald inherited are related to the four elements of medieval alchemy--air, earth, fire, and water. Lynn Thorndike, in A History of Magic and Experimental Science indicates the position of Galen (A.D.129) in transmitting this belief:

> Galen held as his fundamental theory of nature the view which was to prevail through the middle ages, that all natural objects upon this globe are composed of four elements, earth, air, fire, and water, and the cognate view, which he says Hippocrates first introduced and Aristotle later demonstrated, that all natural objects are characterized by four qualities, hot, cold, dry, and moist. From the combinations of these four are produced various secondary qualities.[73]

These elements represent the four spiritual dimensions as well.[74] In discussing traditional symbols (those assigned arbitrary meanings in the course of time, maintained by cultural tradition) Reis explains the connection between the elements and their significance by citing Boehme:

> The elements are related to Boehme's esoteric symbolism as follows: "In Boehme's teaching, they correspond with the four temperaments, 'the four chambers of the Soul's Inn': Fire with the choleric, Air with the sanguine, Water with the phlegmatic, and Earth with the melancholic."[75]

[72]Cf. GMDW, p.557. MacDonald had Law's quarto edition of Boehme's complete works and an early Dutch edition of the Forty Questions in his library. Greville MacDonald refers repeatedly to the evidence of Boehme's thought in his father's works.

[73]Lynn Thorndike, A History of Magic and Experimental Science (New York: Macmillan, 19230, I, 139.

[74]Greville MacDonald, Introduction to Lilith: a romance, by George MacDonald, centenary ed. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1924), p.369. Hereafter cited as centenary ed. of Lilith.

[75]Reis, pp.108-09.

Although Reis considers this tradition an "outmoded medieval psychology" largely forgotten by the reading public and therefore "of little actual literary value" in Lilith,[76] the concept of multiple dimensions was important to MacDonald in writing the book, which was originally subtitled "a tale of the seventh dimension." However, in later revisions, MacDonald subdued this element, perhaps realizing that the interconnections obscured his message. He retained enough to suggest a unity between the natural world and the inner life of man.

MacDonald makes a few direct references to multiple dimensions. When Vane visits the Otherworld, Raven informs him that he is in the "region of the seven dimensions."[77] The concept is unfamiliar to Vane; he learns more through his experiences. An education in the abstracts of "Beauty" and "Truth" and the spiritual dimensions is, according to Greville MacDonald, the main purpose of Lilith's allegorical structure.

> It [Lilith] both binds in one and unfolds the world of concrete Beauty and the realm of abstract Truth. Necessarily also it treats of their condition in dimensions --of which there be seven in all, three concrete, as I take it, and four abstract interblending but more positively vital. These four compose an inseparable unity commonly spoken of as the much debated fourth dimension --that concept of existence which, being spiritual, is not indeed independent of the concrete, but contains and controls the concrete three dimensions in creative manifestation.[78]

[76] Reis, p.109.

[77] George MacDonald, Lilith: a romance (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1895), p.25. Hereafter cited as Lilith. Direct quotations will be followed by page references in parentheses.

[78] GMDW, p.549.

This necessary interweaving elucidates the spiritual life, displaying the interdependence of material and spiritual. For it is "only in a seven-fold vision that we get possessed by the truth in Beauty, and only in like comprehension realize the evil where Beauty is degraded."[79] Although Greville MacDonald's remarks reflect his opinion that Lilith's symbolic significance is the theme of perverted Beauty become destructive, juxtaposed with MacDonald's message that everything "that lives is of God and therefore divine," he accurately re-echoes the importance of development beyond limited physical nature towards unity with God and life in the richer realm of multiple dimensions.

> For all these gifts to Man [i.e. his divineness in love and passion] lie in danger of terrible misuse until he gets above the law of his mortality, overcomes death and rises from the grave of his three dimensions. This misuse, originating in the divorce of the concrete dimensions from the spiritual; and because life is yet and always a portion of the infinite power; may result in disaster of utmost horror.[80]

Lilith contains other similarities to Boehme's philosophy. Boehme's knowledge and use of the Kabbalah,[81] his emphasis on regeneration--"Christ in us rather than Christ for us"--,[82] and the note of apocalyptic urgency in his writings all emerge in MacDonald's fiction. Most prominent, however, is his

[79] GMDW, p.550.

[80] Ibid, p.551.

[81] Stoudt, pp.88, 96.

[82] Ibid, p.51.

continuing stress on unity; MacDonald's all-encompassing view is similar to Boehme's in that he too recognized and embraced the two poles of experience.

> For Boehme's mysticism was bipolar; to want to seek unity is to already know both the disunity that exists and the possibility of its resolution; to seek resolution is to know evil's stubbornness. Boehme's mysticism embraced both joy and misery, both the mystical elevation and the mystical death. In him these two poles cannot be separated and his full mystical experience embraces both.[83]

This is the "yes and no" combined in Boehme's philosophy, and found in the dualistic form of MacDonald's writings.

Similar alchemical imagery--fire as an agent of change and holy fire as the source of regeneration--and use of mirror images appear in both Boehme and MacDonald.[84] Perhaps most interesting for a discussion of Lilith is Boehme's concentration upon Adam and Eve in depicting man's fallen nature and need for redemption.[85] Eve's parallel with Wisdom, "the heavenly Eve," influenced MacDonald's "wise women" who are all ultimate mother figures.[86] Although Boehme's doctrine of the Fall and sin as the results of Adam's sleep which separated his imagination from God and brought him unto selfhood does

[83] Stoudt, pp.62-63.

[84] Ibid, pp.112-13, 213ff.

[85] Ibid, pp.262-98 discusses Boehme's view of man's state.

[86] Cf. Queen Irene in The Princess and Curdie and The Princess and the Goblin (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1912); North Wind in At the Back of the North Wind (New York: Macmillan, 1924); the wise woman in Phantastes (London: J.M. Dent, 1915).

not involve the sleep with which MacDonald works, it is possible that MacDonald derived the concept of redemption through sleep from Boehme's theories. As Stoudt explains:

> Sleep is, however, not punishment alone but also the promise of the future deliverance. In Adam disunity was possible--uncontested and undecided. When once contest has been invited and risk incurred then deliverance also becomes possible. Sleep points forward to Christ's rest in the grave. . . . Newborn man has to return back through Adam's sleep to awake in eternity, when the continuous Blick ["in which God knows man and man knows God" (p.259)] shall be restored.[87]

We have already mentioned MacDonald's interest in the German romanticists and the profound influence upon him. R.L. Wolff traces many recurring motifs in MacDonald's works to the writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann, Tieck, Novalis and others, developing a strong connection. In MacDonald's theory of spiritual evolution, however, those philosophers whose interest in natural philosophy and an ascending order of creation influenced MacDonald's own views are of greatest significance.

The writings of Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg, 1772-1801) affected MacDonald powerfully, judging by his endeavors in translating the Spiritual Songs of Novalis and his repeated use of quotations from that writer.[88] It is possible, as Wolff suggests, that MacDonald felt a spiritual bond with Novalis because of their mutual affliction of tuberculosis; certainly he agreed with many of Novalis' statements, and took the yearning

[87] Stoudt, p.268.

[88] eg. Lilith, p.351.

for infinity, symbolized by the "blue flower of Novalis,"[89] as his own.

The influence of the German tradition of 'dream literature', transmitted to MacDonald through Novalis and E.T.A. Hoffmann from Jean Paul Richter and Jacob Boehme,[90] directed the general course of MacDonald's fantasy; it allowed him a freedom of expression unavailable in the realistic or naturalistic vein. Reis prefers the term "dream-realism" to describe the dream element in MacDonald's fiction because the matter-of-fact reporting of the plain "truth" constitutes realism. The elaborate detail characterizes not the dream itself but the attempts to "rationalize and make coherent" in verbal expression the changes and reversals of dream experience.[91]

The theory of evolution which resulted from the metaphysics of Boehme, shared by Swedenborg and Novalis, encouraged MacDonald's interest in an ascending order of creation. Goethe and Schelling examined the development of evolutionary systems: Goethe formed a doctrine of the types from which plant and animal life had evolved; Schelling sought to trace the advance-

[89] Oskar Walzel, German Romanticism, trans. Alma Elise Lussky (New York: Capricorn, 1966), p.30. Walzel's survey is dense and very comprehensive; his analysis of developments is knowledgeable and sure; and his discussion forms the basis of my comments on the influence of the German philosophies upon MacDonald.

[90] Wolff, p.373.

[91] Reis, p.89.

ment of inanimate nature towards the animate.[92] The general conception was one of ascent through nature and the "spiritualization" of the inanimate, developing an affinity with the spiritual world.

The growth of natural philosophy and the emphasis on an exultation of Nature herself, which characterizes the movement of romanticism in general, resulted in a renewed focus upon unity, through nature, with God. Of paramount importance in the growth of this philosophy were Schleiermacher, Schlegel, Schelling and Novalis with a stress on harmonious unity. Schleiermacher's religious postulate that "all that is finite is contained in the infinite"[93] led the way for Schelling's natural philosophy which saw individual development as a finding of self through a "process of becoming." Oskar Walzel, in German Romanticism, characterizes the essence of Schelling's philosophy in these terms:

> Nature must be envisaged as a vast organism, the component parts of which are ordained to generate life and consciousness. The philosophy of nature is thus the account of the soul in the process of becoming; the different phases of natural life are the "categories" of nature, inevitable intermediary forms, in which reason progresses from unconsciousness into consciousness.[94]

Schleiermacher, Schlegel and Novalis all emphasized a yearning for unity with the infinite, a deification of the commonplace, and a common identity of nature and the absolute.

[92] Walzel, pp.61ff.

[93] Ibid, p.49.

[94] Ibid, p.52.

Perceiving this unity would result in an understanding of truth because, through nature, man would be connected with the divine. Boehme, with Novalis, stressed the importance of personal endeavor to relate the human soul to an idealized, divine nature.

The goal of ultimate unity with God led MacDonald to rebel against the harsh Calvinism of his upbringing.[95] Viewing the doctrine of the elect as "unfair," he based his theories about God on a concept of fairness and justice. MacDonald seems to have developed his creed of ultimate salvation, through a progression towards perfection, from his childhood conviction that he could not love a God who did not love everyone.

Discussing this statement about God's love as a "wish from fear,"[96] Wolff sees this desire for universal salvation as evidence of a personal decision that MacDonald "did not want the damned envying him his own place at the divine board." Wolff's unsubstantiated opinion is more in keeping with his own view of MacDonald as a "hater of mankind" than with the evidence of MacDonald's concerns expressed in his writings.

MacDonald's theory of ultimate salvation does not exempt

[95] Reis, p.33.

[96] Wolff, p.374.

man from recognizing his sinful nature and the need for repentance.[97] This realization is a crucial and necessary step in Lilith; MacDonald makes the point again and again in his depiction of Lilith's struggle. As Reis correctly indicates, man is brought by God to redemption, a process requiring time[98] and man's recognition of his own depravity. Once this insight is attained, man's progress along the "road to salvation" is clear; the sinner is not permanently damned in hell.

In emphasizing that repentance is essential to forgiveness of sin, while at the same time preaching a doctrine of ultimate salvation for all (denying the concept of eternal damnation), MacDonald created his own creed from orthodoxy combined with 'heresy'. It is little wonder that his parishioners at Arundel regarded his theories with distrust and that his first pulpit was his last as an active clergyman.[99] MacDonald's heresies did not receive a sympathetic hearing nor did his presentation of successive afterlives in which unregenerate sinners, as well as the heathen, would have repeated and unlimited opportunities to repent. MacDonald even

[97] Cf. MacDonald's theory operative also in The Princess and Curdie, pp.28-9, when Curdie repents and is then shown the way to the old princess.

[98] See Reis, p.34 for the importance of time in MacDonald's theory.

[99] MacDonald was first given a reduction in salary and then encouraged to leave the parish. Thereafter he was known as a "stick-it" minister--one who was a failure in the calling and deserving of ridicule.

espoused what Reis terms the "ultimate heresy,"[100] the belief that Satan himself would eventually repent of his rebellion and separation from God. Reis speculates that MacDonald only hinted at this consequence through his fictional characters because it was "too bold" to assert directly; MacDonald presents Satan's repentance as an ultimate certainty in Lilith. Just before Lilith enters the state of sleep in the chamber of death, Adam asserts: "When the Shadow [Satan] comes here, it will be to lie down and sleep also.--His hour will come, and he knows it will" (pp.301-2). There is no question that this event will indeed take place; it is only a matter of time.

The age in which MacDonald wrote was torn by religious doubt and growing tension between religion and science. Perhaps the greatest single source of this tension was Charles Darwin's Origin of Species (1859)[101] which explained the evolution of animals (including man) by a theory of development based upon the necessity for survival. Commenting on Darwin's autobiography, Richard L. Schoenwald attempts to clarify Darwin's position not as an opponent of religion but as one interested solely in explaining change:

[100] See Reis, pp.35-36 for his comments on MacDonald's heresies.

[101] Charles Darwin, On the Origin of Species, facs. of 1st ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1966).

> He [Darwin] simply refused to accept God as the Establisher of change because God could not help him understand the rocks and plants and animals which absorbed him. . . . So Darwin abandoned God and let his concern with explaining change lead where it might.[102]

Darwin himself asserts that he was a Theist when he wrote Origin of Species; it was later that his conclusions concerning the First Cause wavered, propelling him towards agnosticism.[103]

Darwin's theory of natural selection revolves around a utopian element which found some acceptance in the Victorian age.[104] Perfection is the goal; man's future is bright according to Darwin's statement that "as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection."[105] He saw "no logical impossibility in the acquirement of any conceivable degree of perfection through natural selection;"[106] many, however, were not sure whither this progress would lead. In The Making of Modern England, Asa Briggs cites Darwin to show the optimism of his theory:

[102] Richard L. Schoenwald, ed., Nineteenth-Century Thought: The Discovery of Change (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p.92.

[103] Ibid, p.73.

[104] See Houghton, p.38.

[105] Schoenwald, p.115.

[106] Darwin, p.204.

> . . . Darwin claimed that there was 'grandeur' in his view of life. 'Whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed laws of gravity', . . . 'from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved'.[107]

Discussing the anxiety of the Victorian period, Walter E. Houghton stresses the fundamental change which took place in the picture of the universe.

> What made religious doubt peculiarly painful to the Victorians was the direction toward which it pointed. As the Christian view of the universe receded, another took its place--the scientific picture of a vast mechanism of cause and effect, acting by physical laws that governed even man himself.[108]

What upset Victorians most was the reflection that this theory cast upon the traditional view of man. It threatened belief in a designed and patterned universe, leaving all open to chance; according to J.B. Schneewind, it

> . . . suggested the further, even more upsetting, thought that man himself was no more than a product of evolution: what then would be the possibility of maintaining that he was a creature with an immortal soul, with free will, and with moral responsibility for his actions?[109]

On these same grounds, Thomas Carlyle also opposed Darwin's theory. If man were merely a developed animal, the "special gifts" of God--conscience, intellect, moral sentiments--would be no more than natural mechanisms evolved for utility rather than a reflection of the divine in man.[110] In place of the

[107] Asa Briggs, The Making of Modern England 1783-1867: The Age of Improvement (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), p.482.

[108] Houghton, p.68.

[109] Schneewind, p.73.

[110] Houghton, p.70.

belief in independent creation, Darwin substituted his view that species "were not immutable" and that "modification was possible under human control."[111]

Charles Kingsley, however, stood apart from the majority in the Christian church by sympathizing with the theory of evolution. In writing to Darwin, he expressed the dichotomy now facing the Victorians: "'Now they have got rid of an interfering God . . . a master-magician as I call it--they have to choose between the absolute empire of accident and a living, immanent, ever-working God.'"[112] The connection between morality and science was broken by Origin of Species; the substitution of accident or chance for intelligent purpose as the governing principle of the natural world shook religious foundations and the faith of the period.

There are elements in common between the theories of Darwin and MacDonald. Progress is also paramount in MacDonald's theory of spiritual evolution, and there is definite change in one who develops inwardly.

Evidence in his writings of MacDonald's type of evolution indicates that his conception of progress included animals.

[111] Briggs, p.482.

[112] Ibid, p.483.

They appear lower in the hierarchy than man[113] but are moving towards the same end. MacDonald used this hierarchical concept to illustrate the danger of regression as well as the hope of progression.[114] Degeneration is a real possibility in MacDonald's doctrine of spiritual education;[115] this is a reflection, as Reis confirms, of "moral and psychological truth."[116] The direction is reversible, depending on the individual's wisdom. MacDonald's evolution is a two-way process; man's inner nature indicates his direction, although he may be unaware of negative changes. In The Princess and Curdie, MacDonald describes Curdie's regression from the position of a "man of the upper world" to a "commonplace man" in these terms:

> There is this difference between the growth of some human beings and that of others: in the one case it is a continuous dying, in the other a continuous resurrection. One of the latter sort comes at length to know at once whether a thing is true the moment it comes

[113] Cf. the seventeenth century concept of the "great chain of being" and the hierarchy therein, and the Oriental philosophy of metempsychosis and the reincarnation of the human soul in human or animal form according to the spiritual wisdom or foolishness evidenced previously. MacDonald is pursuing a tradition of transformation descending from Ovid's classical expression.

[114] The situations of Lina, the Uglies, and the palace officials, in The Princess and Curdie, underscore both the opportunity for progress and the possibility of regression.

[115] Cf. Darwin, p.15. Darwin considered reversion irrelevant to his line of argument because he was interested in the preservation of new characteristics; experiments to determine regression would change the conditions of life.

[116] Reis, p.133.

> before him: one of the former class grows more and more afraid of being taken in, so afraid of it that he takes himself in altogether, and comes at length to believe in nothing but his dinner: to be sure of a thing with him is to have it between his teeth.[117]

This process of evolution works within a time governed by the individual's perception of his personal condition. No duration of time is specified; spiritual transformation depends upon individual progress and is not, as in Darwin's physical evolution, a comprehensive change in time based on a striving for survival.[118] Nor is a regressing human condemned to descent, even if it be expressed in animal form. In Lina's case in The Princess and Curdie, it matters little how long she has occupied her grotesque body; it matters greatly that she desires to escape it and is actively working towards human form once again. The recognition of a condition of sin sets man on the road to repentance and salvation. The time necessary for change is indefinite; like regression, progression is gradual. Again, the clearest example is the physical manifestation of Lina's spiritual condition: her return to humanity is conducted inwardly and gradually. Outward differences are non-existent or so minute that they are undetected by an observer until the internal metamorphosis

[117] The Princess and Curdie, p.25.

[118] Darwin, p.60 indicates that the "struggle for existence" includes not only the survival of the individual but also the production of progeny.

has been achieved.[119]

In presenting his theory of spiritual evolution, MacDonald repeatedly employs a contrast between outward appearance and inner reality. There is often a great difference between the two; the purpose of change is to bring the physical and spiritual sides of man into harmony and unity. This stage in the evolutionary progression, corresponding to the sinner's repentance, is partially accomplished by a process of purification which resolves inner and outer realities into one purified nature, growing nearer to God and perfection.

The purification of man to attain a higher level is a common theme in MacDonald's writings. The cleansing is usually connected with the elements, especially fire and water.[120] The use of water in 'believer's baptism' (for purifying one's old nature and indicating new life) comes readily to mind and, given MacDonald's emphasis upon gradual movement to a higher and richer spiritual plane, F.W. Dillistone's comments on baptism by immersion are appropriate:

[119] When Lina has fulfilled her task and the "time is accomplished," she rushes into the purifying rosefire of the old princess.

[120] Cf. the purification by water of Anodos in Phantastes and Princess Irene in The Princess and the Goblin, and those of the king, Lina and Curdie by fire in The Princess and Curdie. In At the Back of the North Wind Diamond also experiences purification described in elemental terms: he passes through the North Wind (i.e. air) with the sensation of intense cold which stings "like fire" (p.107), italics mine.

> . . . there may have to be the descent into the darkness, the return to the womb, the purging of unworthy stains, but the final outcome is regeneration through the water, a new reception of life-giving properties from the water. To gain renewed contact with the waters is to gain access to the secret of the renewal of life.[121]

The element of fire is also important; we shall examine later the relationship of both fire and water in Lilith's repentance. For MacDonald, fire symbolized the power of God to consume the destructible man and purify him.[122] God is a "consuming fire, that only that which cannot be consumed may stand forth eternal."[123] Although he recognizes the suffering involved, MacDonald asserts that only complete purification (the ongoing process of God's fire burning in man) can destroy impurities and imperfections and help man approach the absolute purity of God. Spiritual evolution is not without pain or despair; it demands sacrifice from the individual to effect a change. The turning point is the individual's recognition of his imperfect state: he must desire to rise upward.

MacDonald's theory also contains an "ethic of action;" the key to this ethic is "the stepwise process of education in time."[124] Progressing gradually, man leaves behind his ignorance, gaining insights and knowledge waiting to be

[121] F.W. Dillistone, Christianity and Symbolism (London: Collins, 1955), p.188.

[122] George MacDonald, "The Consuming Fire," Unspoken Sermons (London: Alexander Strahan, 1867), pp.27-49.

[123] Cf. Heb. 12:29 and Mal. 3:2, 3 as Biblical sources apart from the alchemical connotations.

[124] Reis, p.40.

discovered in the natural world. Because this perception takes time, MacDonald concentrates upon the process of growing towards perfection and not the finished state which is forever beyond our grasp. Denis Donoghue, in his review "The Other Country,"[125] correctly describes MacDonald's work as composed of "metaphors of action" which concentrate upon the power of aspiration towards the goal rather than arrival: the emphasis in MacDonald's fiction is on upward motion towards the centre.

Man's limited perception along the route of spiritual progress poses an ethical problem. Since at any given time his actions will be based on his store of imperfect knowledge, he may not act in accord with the ultimate good. But MacDonald has a solution to this objection: a man must do what he knows to be right, insofar as he is able to judge, and further knowledge will result. There is safety in the desire for right action.[126] MacDonald expresses his philosophy through Curdie in The Princess and Curdie:

[125] Denis Donoghue, "The Other Country," The New York Review of Books, 9 (21 Dec., 1967), 34-36.

[126] Matthew Arnold questions such a view in Culture and Anarchy, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1882), as he discusses "Hebraism and Hellenism." Arnold prefers a sound basis of knowledge on which to act--the sweetness and light of Hellenism--to action arising from imperfect knowledge--the impulse of Hebraism.

> . . . he [Curdie] had come to think that so long as a man wants to do right he may go where he can: when he can go no further, then it is not the way. "Only," said his father, in assenting to the theory, "he must really want to do right, and not merely fancy he does. He must want it with his heart and will, and not with his rag of a tongue."[127]

Although a man is uncertain which course of action to follow, he can act within his limited knowledge and proceed from that point. For "all should understand and imagine the good; that all should begin, at least, to follow and find out God."[128] MacDonald firmly believes that if a man "live at all in harmony with the great laws of being--if he will permit the working out of God's idea in him, he must one day arrive at something greater than what now he can project and behold."[129]

What MacDonald wishes to convey is the change which takes place in a man as he grows closer and closer to unity with God. This spiritual change, initiated by the action of repentance, is expressed in evolutionary terms because it suggests a new and better creation as a result. It expresses the Christian concept of transformation through belief in Jesus Christ as Lord, and the Pauline doctrine of II Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." C.S. Lewis, who greatly admired MacDonald, also chooses this

[127] The Princess and Curdie, p.176.

[128] Orts, p.41.

[129] Ibid, p.223.

parallel with evolution to clarify the Christian idea, emphasizing the need for redemption in the process.

> For mere improvement is not redemption, though redemption always improves people even here and now and will, in the end, improve them to a degree we cannot yet imagine. God became man to turn creatures into sons: not simply to produce better men of the old kind but to produce a new kind of man. It is not like teaching a horse to jump better and better but like turning a horse into a winged creature.[130]

Suggesting that the "Next Step" in evolution has, in fact, already appeared, Lewis contends that it is "not merely difference but a new kind of difference," superceding "Evolution itself as a method of producing change." This totally new step is man's development from a creature of God to a son of God, involving a fundamental change in his nature. It surpasses our idea of evolution based on the past because it is "not something arising out of the natural process of events but something coming into nature from the outside."[131] The spiritual evolution of man results in great changes in an individual. His whole outlook is altered by the perception of unity with God. Newness of life is the thrust of MacDonald's theory, and the promise of his evolution.

The mystical, allegorical and symbolic elements in MacDonald's language and style are, in part, an expression of the influence of the Christian mystics upon his development. His belief that nature is the revelation of God's thought and that

[130] Lewis, Mere Christianity, p.170.

[131] Ibid, p.172.

man must evolve toward ultimate unity with God emerged primarily through his familiarity with the works of Boehme and the theories of such German natural philosophers as Novalis, Swedenborg, and Schelling, who reflected the medieval view of unity between the natural and spiritual worlds. These influences, together with a rebellion against his Calvinist background and the tension created by Darwin's theory of evolution, helped to shape MacDonald's own theory of spiritual evolution. Rather than approaching the evolutionary process as a threat to man's relationship to God (as the church did), MacDonald developed from it a concept of continuing growth, a progression in stages, through time and perception, ultimately to unite man and God.

Chapter II: The Otherworld Setting

In the composition of fantasy, the creation of a secondary world credible to the reader is of primary importance. Writers and critics of fantasy stress the necessity for Coleridge's "willing suspension of disbelief"[132] in the reader in order that the fantastic tale may exist. Disputing this phrase--the willing suspension of disbelief--J.R.R. Tolkien prefers to emphasize the writer's link with the creative process,[133] and the possibility of literary belief if his art and skill are equal to the task:

> What really happens is that the story-maker proves a successful 'sub-creator'. He makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is 'true': it accords with the laws of that world. You therefore believe it, while you are, as it were, inside. The moment disbelief arises, the spell is broken; the magic, or rather art, has failed. You are then out in the Primary World again, looking at the little abortive Secondary World from outside. If you are obliged, by kindliness or circumstance, to stay, then disbelief must be suspended (or stifled) [. . . this suspension of disbelief is a substitute for the genuine thing. . . . if they really liked it, for itself, they would not have to suspend disbelief: they would believe--in this sense.[134]

Discussing techniques in creating imaginary worlds, Lin Carter groups such settings into four broad categories: our world in the remote past before history; our planet in the

[132] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, Everyman ed. (London: J.M. Dent, 1956), pp.168-69.

[133] Cf. Orts, pp.313-16.

[134] J.R.R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories," Tree and Leaf (London: Unwin, 1964), pp.36-37.

distant future; a world like ours in space and time but separated from it along some other dimension; and a planet other than ours.[135] Carter's classification, although it allows for many "anomalies," does not concern itself with fantasies like MacDonald's which habitually effect passage between this world and the created Otherworld. This particular characteristic, by increasing the bond between the two settings, displays the writer's skill in correlating two worlds while maintaining belief. MacDonald's inventive imagination provides many means of passage between Vane's familiar world and the Otherworld; the variation of method confirms his artistic sense.

Vane's first entry into the Otherworld is made through an old mirror in the garret of his house. Having lost Raven in the ascent, in a house almost unknown to him, Vane is overcome with a feeling of "awe and pleasure," realizing that the garret is his own and "unexplored" (p.9). A common symbol of the individual's personality and interests,[136] the unexplored house appears frequently in MacDonald's fiction, reflecting his knowledge of human personality and the "hidden regions of the heart."[137] Whatever meaning we may choose to connect with the

[135]Lin Carter, Imaginary Worlds: The Art of Fantasy (New York: Ballantine, 1973), pp.178-79.

[136]Cf. C.G. Jung, Man and His Symbols (New York: Doubleday, 1968), p.40.

[137]Reis, p.40.

house symbol, it is clear that MacDonald often equates hidden, unexplored rooms in a building with the unknown reaches of the mind.[138] We need not restrict the meaning of Vane's realization to any set formula; it is evident, however, that Vane has literal explorations to conduct within his own house. In the course of Lilith he investigates himself and the worlds in which he exists. As he leans forward to inspect the scene within the mirror (for it reflects neither Vane nor the chamber), Vane stumbles into it, passing through into the Otherworld.[139]

The mirror image is important in fantasy. Tzvetan Todorov's study The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre characterizes certain fantastic themes as "themes of the self"[140] involving vision and perceptions of the world. Citing E.T.A. Hoffmann (a strong influence upon MacDonald) as evidence, Todorov asserts that elements belonging to the realm of sight, such as eyeglasses and mirrors, permit entry into the marvelous universe. "The mirror is present in Hoffmann's

[138] Cf. the attic of the old princess unknown to Curdie and Irene in The Princess and Curdie and The Princess and the Goblin, the explorations of Anodos in Phantastes, and the recurrence of unexplored castles, underground chambers and passages.

[139] C.S. Lewis uses a similar mode of entry into the Otherworld in The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1952). Cf. also the method of entering the Otherworld through the back of a wardrobe in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.

[140] Tzvetan Todorov, The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve Univ. Press, 1973), p.120.

tale whenever the characters must make a decisive step toward the supernatural, and this relation is attested to in almost all fantastic texts."[141] The "derangement" of normal vision is necessary for the discovery of another world:

> Vision pure and simple reveals an ordinary world, without mysteries. Indirect vision is the only road to the marvelous. But is not this transcendence, this transgression, vision's very symbol and in a sense its highest praise? Eyeglasses and mirrors become the image of a vision that is no longer the simple means of connecting the eye to a point in space, which is no longer purely functional, transparent, transitive. These objects are, in a sense, vision materialized or rendered opaque, a quintessence of sight. Moreover we find the same fruitful ambiguity in the word "visionary;" which designates a person who both sees and does not see, and thus implies at once the higher degree and the negation of vision.[142]

Entry to the Otherworld through Vane's mirror is accomplished by the polarization of reflected light. Polarization is the process of aligning the vibrations of light into one plane. For instance,

> if a beam of light is sent through two tourmaline crystals set with their axes parallel to each other, the light will go through both crystals. After the light waves pass through the first crystal, they are polarized. Instead of the waves vibrating in all directions at right angles to their direction of travel, they vibrate only in a plane parallel to the axis of the crystal. Since the second crystal is set parallel to the first, the waves will pass through . . . if the second crystal is rotated so that it is at right angles to the first crystal, the light will not pass through . . .[143]

[141] Todorov, p.121.

[142] Ibid, pp.122-23.

[143] Walter L. Ahner and Harold G. Kastan, Review Text in Physics (New York: Amsco School Publications, 1966), p.136.

By chance Vane finds the correct relation which changes the mirror from an impermeable glass to a doorway.

Modes of entry into and exit from the Otherworld are many and varied, often presenting related appearances on either side of the dimensional barrier. Just as Vane stumbles in through the mirror, he stumbles out through a similar image:

> I spied before me something with a shine, standing between two of the stems. It had no colour, but was like the translucent trembling of the hot air that rises, in a radiant summer noon, from the sunbaked ground, vibrant like the smitten chords of a musical instrument. What it was grew no plainer as I went nearer, . . . I would have passed between the stems, but received a slight shock, stumbled, and fell. When I rose, I saw before me the wooden wall of the garret chamber. I turned, and there was the mirror . . .
>
> (p.16)

As his experience with the mirror shows, Vane's passage is usually unexpected. Even while he stands in his garden, refusing to leave familiar ground, he passes mysteriously into the Otherworld without any mechanics of entry. The masked closet door in his library, through which Vane has seen Raven disappear, also serves as a doorway between the worlds on occasion. It is the means of Vane's escape from the chamber of death and re-entry to his own world on his second visit to the Otherworld. As he runs through that door, he finds himself again in his library.

Connected with this thick closet door masked with "shallow shelves, filled with book backs only," (p.4) is a volume projecting diagonally from the sham covers. The "half-book,"

script upon parchment, cannot be removed. Its contents appear ancient; its immobility suggests that the knowledge contained therein is not readily available to all. Joining the book's symbolism to the emphasis upon multiple dimensions, Greville MacDonald asserts that this half-book, "when the searcher has partially escaped his own concrete dimensions is removable in its entirety and its message is revealed."[144] However, his theory ignores the fact that Raven alone can remove this book which exists in both Vane's library and Raven's--in both this world and the realm of the seven dimensions. Vane cannot remove it when he tries; there is no suggestion that he attempts to do so after his final return from the Otherworld. All Vane discovers concerning the volume, he learns from Raven as the librarian reads its contents, recorded in a language unknown yet familiar to Vane. Clearly Vane has a partial knowledge--or a 'half-book'--while Raven has a whole one.

Vane's library also functions in his final exit from the Otherworld. The library, a common place of interest in MacDonald's fiction, assumes a living character in Lilith, gradually spreading over the house; it, "like an encroaching state, absorbed one room after another" (p.2). The atmosphere of variability, uncertainty and mystery created by the variety of room sizes and manners of entry establishes the library's importance and the interesting possibilities its contents afford. From MacDonald's own voracious reading habits, one assumes that

[144] GMDW, p.549.

the library indicates the acquisition of a wider range of knowledge; it also suggests the richness of speculation. Guided to a little door by God's hand in the closing section of Lilith, Vane passes into his own library, alone. Behind him is "the board of a large book in the act of closing" (p.348).

No specific place, however, joins the two worlds. Even the closet, which served as a passageway for Vane, is not an invariable connection; Raven tells a mystified Vane that the closet "is not nearer our cottage, and no farther from it, than any or every other place" (p.210). Entry is unrestricted by physical laws.

The other major passage between the two worlds involves the metamorphosis of a tree in Lilith's courtyard into Vane's fountain, forming a bridge between the worlds.

> The moon shone like silvery foam here and there on the rugged bole, and a little rush of wind went through the top with a murmurous sound as of water falling softly into water. . . . as I approached the summit, I became aware of a peculiar unsteadiness: every branch on which I placed foot or laid hold, seemed on the point of giving way. When my head rose above the branches near the top, . . . that instant I found myself drenched from head to foot. The next, as if plunged in a stormy water, I was flung about wildly, and felt myself sinking.[145]
>
> (pp.192-93)

He surfaces in his own fountain.

Vane's first view of the Otherworld landscape in the non-reflecting mirror suggests its resemblance to the Scottish heaths and moors familiar to MacDonald:

[145] Italics mine. Note the language--"like", "as if"--which reinforces the uncertainty of the metamorphic process.

> I saw before me a wild country, broken and heathy. Desolate hills of no great height, but somehow of strange appearance, occupied the middle distance; along the horizon stretched the tops of a far-off mountain range; nearest me lay a tract of moorland, flat and melancholy.
>
> (p.10)

Accompanying the desolate scenery is often a wind "strangely cold, as if from some region where it was always night" (p.25). With Raven at his cottage, Vane surveys the surrounding landscape as the sexton's burial ground.

> Wherever the dreary wind swept, there was the raven's cemetery! He was sexton of all he surveyed! lord of all that was laid aside! I stood in the burial-ground of the universe; its compass the unenclosed heath, its wall the gray horizon, low and starless!
>
> (p.34)

Vane, in his wanderings, finds himself in desert-like country, a wasteland without a trace of water. In MacDonald's fantasy the wasteland setting is common, usually indicating emotional immaturity or a lack of knowledge about life by using an absence of tears or flowing water.[146]

Desolate landscape is frequently associated with spiritual experience. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel record the judgement of God upon the Israelites and their enemies, threatening the desolation of the land because of their neglect of His commands. The land will reflect their spiritual and moral condition. Similarly, the wasting of the land in the Wasteland myth

[146] In "The Light Princess" MacDonald identifies a lack of tears with a refusal to grow up. In Lilith, also, maturing requires the ability to weep.

corresponds to the ruler's sterility. The wasteland image is reflected in the landscapes crossed by the Grail questers in Arthurian literature, recounted in Malory's Le Morte Darthur and those traversed by Gawain in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.[147] Tennyson, in Idylls of the King, records the connection of thirst with such a dismal landscape:

> . . . all these things at once
> Fell into dust, and I was left alone
> And thirsting in a land of sand and thorns.[148]

The wasteland's symbolic connection with sexual sterility is recorded in T.S. Eliot's The Wasteland (1922)[149] as well. In The Quest of the Holy Grail, Jessie Weston explains the euphemistic sense of "thigh" in the Maimed King myth, and the close connection between the ruler and the land:

> Thus we can now understand how the wasting of the land can be connected with, and directly caused by, the death, or infirmity, of the king, and how achievement of the Quest, by restoring to health . . . the personage upon whose vitality the vitality of the land depends, can restore these wastes to verdure.[150]

Also, she stresses the hero's task in the restoration, and his function of "Freeing the Waters."[151]

[147] Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte Darthur (1911; rpt. London: Philip Lee Warner, 1920); Pearl: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, ed. A.C. Cawley (London: J.M. Dent, 1962), pp.77ff.

[148] Alfred Lord Tennyson, The Complete Poetical Works of Tennyson, Cambridge ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1898), p.406.

[149] T.S. Eliot, Selected Poems (London: Faber & Faber, 1954).

[150] Jessie L. Weston, The Quest of the Holy Grail (1913; rpt. London: Frank Cass, 1964), pp.8-9.

[151] Ibid, p.81.

The mythic analogy with Lilith is evident. Lilith's own spiritual desolation is reflected in the wasted surroundings, and her responsibility is clearly noted. By imprisoning its life-giving waters, she has changed a once fertile land into desert.

> But the wicked princess gathered up in her lap what she could of the water over the whole country, closed it in an egg, and carried it away. Her lap, however, would not hold more than half of it; and the instant she was gone, what she had not yet taken fled away underground, leaving the country as dry and dusty as her own heart. Were it not for the waters under it, every living thing would long ago have perished from it.
>
> (p.101)

Lilith's spiritual condition must change in order that the land may become fertile once more. After her repentance, Vane is given the task of "freeing" the imprisoned waters by burying Lilith's severed hand. But the completion of his heroic function is possible only following Lilith's change. Presently the land and its inhabitants reflect the lack of spiritual nourishment which the absence of water symbolizes. MacDonald evokes the living water that Jesus promised in John 4:14: "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life," and also God's promise in Isaiah 43:19 that He would "make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert." Although no water can be seen, Vane is "haunted by an aural mirage, hearing plainly the voice of many waters" (p.69) beneath the earth. This sign indicates that the lack of life-giving water is temporary; when Vane is weary and lies down,

the sound of the life source imprisoned underground refreshes him.[152]

The existence of a passage connecting the two worlds, while joining them on another dimension, does not make them the same. Todorov explains that the interpenetration of the spiritual and physical worlds modifies their fundamental categories. Hence, the "time and space of the supernatural world" differ from our common experience.[153] MacDonald and Tolkien have both emphasized the need for internal consistency and adherence to the laws designated for the imaginary world.[154] We will now examine some of the laws operative in the Otherworld, and its relation to the familiar one.

Upon his first entry, a bewildered Vane immediately doubts his reactions, wondering if the material and physical relations familiar to him have ceased to hold in this strange world. Both the natural world of Vane and the Otherworld occupy the same place at the same time, although Vane's scientific knowledge declares this impossible. Raven indicates that to a man of the universe (not of the limited world) this co-existence is indeed possible. Because of the imposition of two worlds upon each other, Vane remains in his own house even while he

[152] See Lilith, pp.73, 93, 110.

[153] Todorov, p.118.

[154] Cf. Tolkien, op. cit.; MacDonald, "The Fantastic Imagination." Lin Carter upholds the same necessity for a believable created world regarding geography (pp.180-82). He calls it "reason."

stands with Raven in the Otherworld. In this world, a tree stands on Vane's kitchen hearth at home; a rosebush here is close to a lady playing the piano in his house.

Time in the Otherworld is at variance with that in the natural world. During Vane's apparently short conversation with Raven in his second visit, time speeds by. To Vane's challenge that their encounter began less than an hour ago, Raven replies, "I have been widening your horizon longer than that, Mr. Vane; but never mind" (p.26). Moments later, when Vane declares he must return home for an appointment, he learns that it was broken "days ago." There is no hurry; the inhabitants "do not go much by the clock here. Still, the sooner one begins to do what has to be done, the better" (p.28).

Even as hours and days pass at different rates here, the seasons also operate apart from the principles of natural law. Gazing upon a hawthorn at the heath's edge, Vane prefers to doubt the visual evidence rather than the accepted laws of nature.

> 'It seems indeed an ancient hawthorn; but this is not the season for the hawthorn to blossom!' I objected.
> 'The season for the hawthorn to blossom,' he replied, 'is when the hawthorn blossoms. . . .'
>
> (p.29)

As they approach Raven's cottage, Vane feels the onset of winter. Their journey seems to have taken only half a day; Raven explains the reason for swift travel here. "In your world you cannot pull up the plumb-line you call gravitation,

and let the world spin round under your feet" (p.33).[155]

Days here encompass not only morning, noon and night but also the seasons:

> The day might well be long in that region, for it contained the seasons. Winter slept there, the night through, in his winding-sheet of ice; with childlike smile, Spring came awake in the dawn; at noon, Summer blazed abroad in her gorgeous beauty; with the slow-changing afternoon, old Autumn crept in, and died at the first breath of the vaporous, ghostly night.
>
> (p.34)

Most of Lilith's action takes place in moonlight. The moon becomes personified, showing interest in Vane.

> The moon seemed to know something, for she stared at me oddly. Her look was indeed icy-cold, but full of interest, or at least curiosity. She was not the same moon I had known on the earth; her face was strange to me, and her light yet stranger. . . . Every time I looked up, I found her staring at me with all her might! At first I was annoyed, as at the rudeness of a fellow creature; but soon I saw or fancied a certain wondering pity in her gaze: why was I out in her night?
>
> (p.63)

Vane always sees the moon in her fullness; her motions puzzle him. Only hours after he has watched her set, she is shining again. Later he discovers that this world has several moons but the laws governing their times and orbits remain mysteries. The constellations are also unknown in Vane's familiar world.

The moon rises to illuminate his path but she cannot guide Vane; she offers only an ignorant choice. His only defense against many of the horrors Vane encounters, the moon symbolizes the spiritual light which protects against evil

[155] Cf. the quotation from GMDW, p.482 given on p.20 of this thesis.

and darkness.[156] MacDonald chooses the moon as Vane's illumination rather than the sun because Vane is being exposed to the diffuse light of the imagination instead of the bright light of reason.[157]

During his lonely crossing of the Bad Burrow (the most demonic setting within Lilith), Vane glimpses hideous creatures born from the strange soil of this Otherworld. He is unconscious of his dependence upon the moon for safety:

> Thus I strove to keep my heart above the waters of fear, nor knew that she whom I distrusted was indeed my defense from the realities I took for phantoms: her light controlled the monsters, . . . the head of a worm began to come slowly out of the earth, as big as that of a polar bear and much resembling it, with a white mane to its red neck. The drawing wriggles with which its huge length extricated itself were horrible, yet I dared not turn my eyes from them. . . .
>
> All the night through as I walked, hideous creatures, no two alike, threatened me.
>
> (p.64)

Vane's first sight of Lilith occurs in this setting.

> She was beautiful, but with such pride at once and misery on her countenance that I could hardly believe what yet I saw. Up and down she walked, vainly endeavouring to lay hold of the mist and wrap it around her. The eyes in the beautiful face were dead, and on her left side was a dark spot, against which she would now and then press her hand, as it to stifle pain or sickness.
>
> (p.66)

She, too, belongs with the hideous creatures,[158] although

[156] When light disappears, evil arises. Cf. John 3:19, 20.

[157] Cf. J.E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), p.127.

[158] This is another example of the metamorphosis theme.

Vane does not comprehend her dissolution into serpent and bat-like forms.

> But she began to writhe in such torture that I stood aghast. A moment more and her legs, hurrying from her body, sped away serpents. From her shoulders fled her arms as in terror, serpents also. Then something flew up from her like a bat, and when I looked again, she was gone. The ground rose like the sea in a storm; terror laid hold upon me; . . .
>
> (p.66)

To some extent, Lilith fulfils the requirements for an allegorical "demonic agent" of the type suggested by Angus Fletcher in Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode with an appearance of unadulterated power and a tendency to become an image,[159] but that agent is denied the freedom of choice essential to MacDonald's use of the Lilith character. Her capacity for change removes her from this category.

Hideously formed beasts are not the only strange inhabitants in this world. In the Evil Wood, where the "non-sleepers" wake each night to kill their dead (a physical death repeated because of their refusal to enter into spiritual life), Vane witnesses a battle of skeletons. The account shows MacDonald's ability to create a vivid scene for his readers:

> Wild cries and roars of rage, shock of onset, struggle prolonged, all mingled with words articulate, surged in my ears. Curses and credos, snarls and sneers, laughter and mockery, sacred names and howls of hate, came huddling in chaotic interpenetration. Skeletons and phantoms fought in maddest confusion. Swords swept through the phantoms: they only shivered. Maces crashed on the

[159] Cf. Fletcher, pp.68-69.

> skeletons, shattering them hideously: not one fell or ceased to fight, so long as a single joint held two bones together. Bones of men and horses lay scattered and heaped; grinding and crunching them under foot fought the skeletons. Everywhere charged the bone-gaunt white steeds: everywhere on foot or on windblown misty battle-horses raged and ravened and raved the indestructible spectres; . . .
>
> (p.71)

Above this tumult a woman with dead eyes and a dark spot on her side incites the dead, calling, "Ye are men: slay one another." Lilith is directing this slaughter, urging death, not life.

This appearance of skeletal beings in battle is thematically related to the dance of the spectres and to the two skeletons by the carriage,[160] although a distinction exists between them. The dance embodies "the story of life," reflecting the actions of the living in corpses with skulls that contain living ey

While discussing the "Danse Macabre" in The Waning of the Middle Ages, J. Huizinga examines its development and meaning:

> The indefatigable dancer is the living man himself in his future shape, a frightful double of his person. 'It is yourself,' said the horrible vision to each of the spectators. It is only towards the end of the [fifteenth] century that the figure of the great dancer, of a corpse with hollow and fleshless body, becomes a skeleton, as Holbein depicts it. Death in person has then replaced the individual dead man.

[160] Lilith, pp.115-29.

> While it reminded the spectators of the frailty and the vanity of earthly things, the death-dance at the same time preached social equality as the Middle Ages understood it, Death levelling the various ranks and professions.[161]

The dance of the ghostly spectres provides another element of education for Vane. The skulls represent the essential deadness in many lives, and the pretensions of man stripped away, leaving only a tiny spark of life in the shining eyes. The dancers' former appearance is now thwarted to reveal the reality underneath.

> Had they used their faces, not for communication, not to utter thought and feeling, not to share existence with their neighbors, but to appear what they wished to appear, and conceal what they were? And, having made their faces masks, were they therefore deprived of those masks, and condemned to go without faces until they repented?
>
> (p.117)

In his questioning, wondering how long such punishment must endure before the spectres yield and begin "to love and be wise," Vane suggests the all-important theme of repentance. Raven confirms the hope of restoration when speaking of the "bony stage of retrogression" of the carriage skeletons. Clearly they are literally "the bones of life"--man with nothing but bare existence; MacDonald's theory of evolution is expressed by the addition of flesh as a man grows toward truth.[162] Raven extends hope through the processes of love

[161] J. Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages (London: Edward Arnold, 1955), p.131.

[162] A possible Biblical source for MacDonald's imagery here is the resurrection of the dry bones recorded in Ezekiel, chapter 37.

and truth for these skeletons "in hell,"[163] again presenting a process of development. Comparing the dancing skeletons with the quarelling couple, he indicates that this regenerative process is accomplished in time.

> For many years these [the couple] will see none such as you saw last night. Those are centuries in advance of these. You saw that those could even dress themselves a little! It is true they cannot yet retain their clothes so long as they would--only, at present, for a part of the night; but they are pretty steadily growing more capable, and will by and by develop faces; for every grain of truthfulness adds a fibre to the show of their humanity. Nothing but truth can appear; and whatever is must seem.
>
> (p.127-28)

Within the Otherworld, MacDonald describes two cities, Bulika and the Heavenly City. Essentially, they correspond to the "earthly city" and the "heavenly city" Augustine presents in The City of God.[164] Bulika fulfils the characteristics of this earthly city where, deprived of God's light, the citizens seek personal privilege and power. The city is known for its avarice and self-interest and, as Vane enters in, he finds all the reports of selfishness and treachery true:

> poverty was an offence! Deformity and sickness were taxed; and no legislation of their princess was more heartily approved of than what tended to make poverty subserve wealth.
>
> (p.162)

[163] Because of his belief in ultimate universal salvation, hell, for MacDonald, was a personal--and temporary--condition.

[164] Augustine, The City of God (New York: Random House, 1950), Book XI, esp. ch.1.

The people dig in their cellars for precious stones, hoarding their riches.[165]

The Heavenly City, the city of God in which we all seek "citizenship," is occupied by those who live according to God's direction. The city in Lilith is "not at all like Bulika" (p.343). As Bulika corresponds to the city of Babylon in Revelation 18:1-10, so MacDonald's Heavenly City echoes the description of the apocalyptic city of Jerusalem in Revelation 21:10-23. It is on a mountain surrounded by clouds, and shines with the splendour of precious gems. Flashes of light reveal birds with feathers gleaming with all the colours of the rainbow; the river shines like pale beryl; the stairs are of porphyry and serpentine (p.345-46).

MacDonald's images are grouped to reinforce the concept of the duality of good and evil which underlies his theme. They are antithetical, falling into categories of light and dark, life and death, innate wisdom and stupidity. MacDonald uses familiar images but combines and reinforces them in order to multiply their effect upon the reader, who responds to them instinctively in an emotional manner. For instance, the Shadow, a symbol of evil, is dark and associated with death. The skeletons also represent death, and the earth of the burrow produces beasts which epitomize the ugliness of evil. Lilith,

[165] Cf. the inhabitants of the city of Gwyntystorm in The Princess and Curdie.

who is spiritually dead, has a dark spot on her side and sits in a black hall to see herself in reflected (not direct) sunlight. The Giants, although not frighteningly evil, are nevertheless stupid and ugly, and associated with Lilith's forces in the battle between good and evil. And, as we mentioned earlier, the evidence of the sterility of evil is displayed by the desolate and wasted condition of the land.

Contrasted with these evil images are the symbols of good and light. Most prominent are the light-related images of the moon, mirrors, water, crystal, white-coloured and transparent substances such as gems. The eyes of Eve, especially, are connected with life and creation and shine with light. She is also associated with innate wisdom, together with the Little Ones who are the antithesis of the Giants. The desolation of the earthly city of Bulika under Lilith's control is set against the rich life and splendour of the Heavenly City flowing with the water of the river of Life.

In an attempt to define the Otherworld setting in Lilith, we have discussed some of its peculiar characteristics--landscape, modes of entry and exit, physical laws of time and space in relation to the familiar world, and certain allegorical images found there. By connecting the skeletal symbol with the concepts of repentance and development, MacDonald joins Otherworld events to his central message. His skill in creating a secondary world which consistently abides by its own physical laws while maintaining loyalty to universal

moral laws, confirms MacDonald's fantastic art.

In addition to the dualism created by the existence of the two realms, MacDonald consciously manipulates his images to reinforce the antithetical concepts of good and evil. By grouping them together in various combinations, he creates an increased symbolic resonance, which moves the reader emotionally. The images, familiar to the reader, are still effective because they appear in different settings, gaining added emotional impetus each time they appear.

Chapter III: The Embodiment of the Message

As critics have recognized,[166] MacDonald's characters conform to archetypal patterns. Viewing the psychological archetype as an integral part of the romance genre, Reis compares the use of stereotypes in the novel with that of archetypes in fantasy: both uses display a tendency to see the general in character.[167]

MacDonald's characters fall into types--the Wise Old Woman/mother figure, sometimes also acting as the Guide; the evil seductress; the archetypal Shadow; the Innocent, who may also be the Initiate. Especially in his children's literature, they exist as "princes and princesses, villains and heroines, paragons and victims."[167] Since the battle between good and evil rages continually in MacDonald's fiction, it is perhaps inevitable that his characters should reflect this division.

As we examine the characters in Lilith through the action, we will see the types which surround Vane and Lilith. However, because MacDonald's message is development, these two characters assume greater depth than the other types. Focusing upon them, we will follow the changes and revelation of their characters as they exemplify MacDonald's thematic concerns.

[166] Reis, pp.105, 115-18.

[167] Ibid, p.115.

[168] Ibid, p.105.

Lilith opens with a portrait of Vane's mental traits. His name suggests vanity and the inconstancy of a weathervane. "Vane" is also nearly an anagram for "Raven," which suggests that when Vane has changed inwardly, and his name has settled on his forehead (cf. p.100), he will become similar to Raven. Although he is not physically described to us, we learn of Vane's shortsightedness (p.10) which warns us that his immediate perceptions are unreliable and explains his inability to distinguish good from evil.[169] We know that he is an Oxford graduate of independent means, alone in the world. Devoted to the physical sciences, seeking analogies between physical and metaphysical facts and hypotheses, Vane is an excellent pupil for education in the philosophical possibilities of the Otherworld. Directed towards Vane's interest in "the history of the human mind in relation to supposed knowledge" suggestive of his metaphysical tendency, we anticipate his further excursions into a world affording new and deeper knowledge.

The existence in the narrative of a "slender old man, in a dark coat, shiny as from much wear" (p.5) who comes and goes at uncertain intervals intensifies the mysterious atmosphere surrounding the library. From the butler Vane learns the legend of his ancestor's librarian (Mr. Raven) who still makes sporadic appearances in the house. Vane's impression of Raven

[169] Cf. Gulliver's shortsightedness in Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels, ed. John F. Ross (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1948).

as a bird[170] is altered by a glimpse of his face.

> I saw no raven, but the librarian--the same slender elderly man, in a rusty black coat, large in body and long in the tails. I had seen only his back before; now for the first time I saw his face. It was so thin that it showed the shape of the bones under it, suggesting the skulls his last-claimed profession must have made him familiar with. But in truth I had never before seen a face so alive, or a look so keen or so friendly as that in his pale blue eyes, which yet had a haze about them as if they had done much weeping.
>
> (p.36)

Raven's identity should be clear from the outset. He is more than an ancient librarfan who appears variously as man and bird, and functions as librarian and sexton: professions which, Raven asserts, are much the same. "Except you are a true sexton, books are but dead bodies to you and a library nothing but a catacomb" (p.37). A sexton's job is to release the living soul imprisoned in a dead body; a librarian's is to release the living word imprisoned within the covers of a book. During the confronation between Raven and Lilith in Vane's library, Vane finally understands Raven's true identity:

> Then at last I understood that Mr. Raven was indeed Adam, the old and the new man;[171] and that his wife, ministering in the house of the dead, was Eve, the mother of us all, the lady of the New Jerusalem.
>
> (p.206)

Vane, in learning from Mr. Raven, has as his teacher the father

[170] George Dumézil, Gods of the Ancient Northmen (Berkley: Univ. of California Press, 1973), p.28. In Norse mythology Odin has two ravens (mind and memory) who provide communication between Valhalla and earth, even as Raven operates between the Otherworld and Vane's familiar one.

[171] Cf. I Cor. 15:45-47 and Christ as the second Adam. Raven's identity takes on added significance.

of mankind; Eve is the ultimate mother figure for a man without earthly parents.

Vane's first visit to the Otherworld focuses upon a question of identity. Removed from his prior knowledge of himself, Vane's answer, "I am myself," is woefully inadequate, indeed meaningless.

> I became at once aware that I could give him no notion of who I was. Indeed, who was I? It would be no answer to say I was who! Then I understood that I did not know myself, did not know what I was, had not grounds on which to determine that I was one and not another.
>
> (p.14)

Vane's first lesson concerns this metaphysical question of being and entity. Because Vane has allowed Raven existence by recognizing him, Raven begins his instruction with this concept: "No one can say he is himself, until first he know that he <u>is</u>, and then what <u>himself</u> is. In fact nobody is himself, and himself is nobody" (p.15). Without understanding, Vane has received the suggestion that emphasis on self is the core of neither existence nor individuality.

Stumbling back into his own world (Raven has said that one must be at home to come and go at will), haunted by recurring questions of identity and the Otherworld, Vane finally surrenders his own meagre knowledge as useless. This is an important beginning, for dissatisfaction with present knowledge is a necessary prerequisite for further learning.

His second visit reveals more about the nature of

individuality and freedom. After Raven changes a ground worm into a butterfly, Vane rebukes him for allowing the creature to forget its origins. Claiming that he teaches creatures to find their origins (in the thematic scheme, to find unity with God), Raven draws a parallel between sextons and the clergy: the business of both is to help people to reach God. Physical death should not be a prerequisite: the air should be "full of worms" on their way upward. This metamorphosis is, in essence, the spiritual rebirth, and it becomes a dominant symbolic image. Commenting upon this passage, Greville MacDonald quotes from his father's novel, David Elginbrod (1863):

> I think of death as the first pulse of the new strength shaking itself free from the mouldy remnants of earth-garments, that it may begin in freedom the new life that grows out of the old. The caterpillar dies into the butterfly.[172]

Even in this early novel, MacDonald's theoretical evolution appears. His use of nature's principles to express spiritual concepts reflects his belief that nature reveals the workings of God.

Thinking himself tricked into his second visit (forgetting that he has not met the requirements for free passage), Vane again asserts his personal individuality and freedom. Raven extends his earlier lesson: a man is as free as he makes himself; no one can make a man act against his will once he has one; when he becomes an individual, no one can "wrong" his

[172] GMDW, p.555.

individuality. Raven suggests that Vane can proceed towards true freedom and individuality if his perceptions develop; however, his inward condition must change.

Confused by Raven's cryptic and riddling remarks on the nature of this Otherworld,[173] Vane asks to be shown the way home. The reply: "To go back, you must go through yourself, and that way no man can show another" (p.28). Vane must find his own path, justifying his existence by individual action; he must perceive by going through and, looking back, see more than was evident before.[174] By recognizing the essence of things unified with his own and by learning his ignorance, Vane will grow towards wisdom.[175]

During his second visit, Vane reaches Raven's cottage, meets the librarian's wife (Eve), and becomes acquainted with the chamber of death. Eve's connection with death is likely a result of her association with eating the fruit in the Garden (Genesis 2:17, 3:3). As suggested in Boehme's philosophy discussed earlier, Adam and Eve may function as agents

[173] It is interesting to note, in Lilith, that MacDonald strictly adheres to his own theory (echoed later by Tolkien in his essay "On Fairy-Stories") that, while physical laws may change in the Otherworld, moral laws remain the same.

[174] Cf. the quotation from GMDW, p.482 given on p.20 of this thesis.

[175] Cf. I Corinthians 3:18.

of death's defeat after bringing it into the world: hence, they serve as custodians of the chamber of death. MacDonald's description of Eve suggests her purity and her connection with the divine, creative life force.

> She was all in white--as white as new-fallen snow; and her face was as white as her dress, but not like snow, for at once it suggested warmth. I thought her features were perfect, but her eyes made me forget them. The life of her face and her whole person was gathered and concentrated in her eyes, where it became light. . . . the still face might be a primeval perfection; the live eyes were a continuous creation.[176]
>
> (pp.34-35)

Again, Eve's connection with eternal life is stressed.

> It was as if the splendour of her eyes had grown too much for them to hold, and, sinking into her countenance, made it flash with a loveliness like that of Beatrice in the white rose of the redeemed. Life itself, life eternal, immortal, streamed from it, an unbroken lightning.
>
> (p.40)

After a meal of bread and wine, "the perfect meal" (p.38) of the Eucharist, Vane is informed that he must enter the unearned sleep "heartily" without concern for waking, which will come of itself. Although he agrees to trust the sexton, Vane is apprehensive at the sight of the cold bodies asleep in "something deeper still" than death. The different meaning of the word 'dead' here, and its connection with resurrection, is paramount.

[176] Eyes are "the windows of the soul," indicating character--Eve's alive and flashing, Adam's keen, Mara's weeping, Lilith's dark and dead.

> I almost forget what they mean by dead in the old world. If I said a person was dead, my wife would understand one thing and you would imagine another. . . . You observe that here the sexton lays his dead on the earth; he buries very few under it! In your world he lays huge stones on them, as if to keep them down; I watch for the hour to ring the resurrection-bell, and wake those that are still asleep.
>
> (p.43)

This coming resurrection directly parallels the worm/butterfly metamorphosis and rebirth.

Raven's life/death inversion only confirms Vane's suspicions that the sexton is mad; Vane cannot comprehend the spiritual emphasis. Although he calls himself alive, it is Vane who brings a death odor to the chamber by his doubt and fear.

The difference between the life and death Vane comprehends now, and that which Raven knows, is one of quality: natural physical life opposed to spiritual life. Vane understands only the physical, a shadow of the enriched life which sleep in Adam's chamber affords. C.S. Lewis uses two distinct names to define the difference, although we use the same word 'life' for both.

> The Biological sort which comes to us through Nature, and which (like everything else in Nature) is always tending to run down and decay so that it can only be kept up by incessant subsidies from Nature in the form of air, water, food, etc., is Bios. The Spiritual life which is in God from all eternity, and which made the whole natural universe, is Zoe. . . . A man who changed from having Bios to having Zoe would have gone through as big a change as a statue which changed from being a carved stone to being a real man.[177]

[177] Lewis, Mere Christianity, pp.25-26.

Maintaining the distinction between these two kinds of life, we can understand Adam's desire that all should achieve the spiritual.

Again Vane returns to the familiar world. Ashamed of his fear, he re-enters Raven's world through the garret mirror: this time he is actively searching to enter. His request for sleep is now denied, for it is not "his time." Nor can Raven show him home, because the word 'home' has two connotations: Vane means his physical house; Raven means one's origin.[178] After Vane requests direction to some of his kind, Raven indicates the west to him. Reis suggests--I think correctly--that this is evidence of MacDonald's subtle humour: Raven is mocking Vane, telling him that creatures like himself (those sharing his imperfections) live to the west, while Raven takes an eastward direction. Concerning the mythic meaning of the eastward journey, Reis says that it is "the journey toward the source of life, toward the Asian source of civilization, the Garden of Eden, the rising sun, Christ's birthplace."[179] Feeling bitter, abandoned and without guidance,

[178] This is another example of man's ultimate quest and eternal search for a return to God, expressed in such poems as Henry Vaughn's "The Retreat." Vaughan, according to Wolff, (p.146), was MacDonald's favorite seventeenth century poet.

[179] Reis, p.130. Cf. William Langland, The Vision of Piers Plowman (London: Sheed, 1959) and its opening reference to the "Eastwards" direction of the Tower of Truth opposed to the association of the west with worldliness and sin. Conversely, Henry David Thoreau, in his essay "Walking" which MacDonald had read, equates the west with freedom, wildness and the future. See Thoreau, pp.176-81.

Vane complains; Raven reminds him that he chose to come. With "neither quest nor purpose, hope nor desire," he must make his way alone. However, a guide is provided; from the ground Raven produces a bird-butterfly, like a fire-fly, which lights Vane's way.

This lighted guide rouses Vane's covetousness. Through his greedy, possessive grasping he destroys his helpmate, losing his only guidance. It dies when subordinated to himself "its light went out; all was dark as pitch" (p.63). This imagery recalls Raven's earlier comments concerning dead knowledge and live, growing thoughts.[180] The desire to contain and restrict a thought kills it; ideas, as well as people, must have freedom.[181] Using the same fire-fly metaphor, MacDonald urges interpretive freedom for his stories.

> Let fairytale of mine go for a firefly that now flashes, now is dark, but may flash again. Caught in a hand which does not love its kind, it will turn to an insignificant, ugly thing, that can neither flash nor fly.[182]

While travelling in the Otherworld, Vane discovers the existence of the Little Ones, the Giants, and Mara. Ranging in age from babies to about thirteen, the Little Ones care for

[180] Cf. Lilith, p.27 and the figurative bookworm/butterfly metamorphosis of Raven.

[181] Cf. Erich Auerbach, Mimesis (New York: Doubleday, 1957), p.135 as he quotes from Augustine, with whose writings MacDonald was undoubtedly familiar; "Let them stretch out not as if to grasp those things that cannot be grasped, as if to comprehend the incomprehensible, but let them stretch out as if to take part."

[182] Orts, p.321.

Vane while he is held captive by the cruel Giants. Questioning Lona, the 'mother', about their origins and customs, Vane becomes interested in their stunted development. The Giants and Little Ones are not separate races but variations of the same one, connected by a process of retrogression. The children are the forerunners of the Giants--their "firsters":[183] if a Little One "doesn't care, he grows greedy, and then lazy, and then big, and then stupid, and then bad" (p.86), forgetting his origins. Comparing these Giants and the rich of his own world, Vane comments that as the big "care for nothing but bigness," so the rich care only for riches.[184] Vane associates the change into a Giant with the process of growing up, and wishes to regain the essential child-like nature of the Little Ones.

However, the lives of the Little Ones are not the ultimate development; their growth is arrested. MacDonald's view of childhood is more developed than the Wordsworthian: an individual must not remain a child by refusing to accept the responsibilities and sorrows of adulthood.[185] Although

[183] Cf. the Wordsworthian concept of the child as the father of man.

[184] MacDonald is not lashing out against the rich, as Wolff contends, but is merely emphasizing th Biblical parallel between the difficulty of a rich man entering heaven and that of a camel going through the eye of a needle in Matt. 19:23, 24. It is interesting to note that the preceding chapter asserts that one must become "as little children" to enter the kingdom of heaven.

[185] Reis, p.129.

Vane questions the babies' origins,[186] the Little Ones are ignorant of reproductive processes--there is no sexual or emotional growth in their world. Perceiving that tears are unknown to the children who have never seen water, Vane surmises that this lack caused their arrested condition. Uncertain how to help the Little Ones, he travels on, hoping to gain that knowledge. MacDonald sounds a warning: "the man who would do his neighbor good must first study how not to do him evil, and must begin by pulling the beam out of his own eye" (p.96).[187] Later, Raven criticizes Vane's departure: "When you were with them, you were where you could help them: you left your work to look for it" (p.196). Although Vane had detected the connection between water and growth, he had not thought to dig a well to the underground waters.[188]

As he journeys across the waste, Vane meets the Cat-Woman, Mara,[189] whom all but Lona fear. Hiding her face from him, she takes Vane to her cottage, which is founded on a rock in the desert sand.[190] Again Vane is asked his name

[187] Cf. Matt. 7:3-5 and Luke 6:41, 42.

[188] Wolff (p.351) sees this passage as symbolic of MacDonald's regret that he did not remain a minister, supporting Wolff's continual desire to see self-recrimination in MacDonald's literature. I agree with Reis's explanation that Vane did not do the little he knew how to do, which corresponds with MacDonald's own ethics.

[189] Mara, the daughter of Adam. Cf. also Naomi's change of name to Mara in Ruth 1:20 in her sorrow.

[190] Cf. the parable of the wise and foolish men, Matthew 7:24-27.

and cannot tell it; Mara assures him that he has one written on his forehead. He must come to terms with his name and identity. Mara asserts that the Little Ones will also learn their own names and develop spiritually when they obtain the water they require. And they will have it "when they are thirsty enough" (p.103).[191]

During the night Vane watches Mara send a large white cat-like animal towards Bulika. We may distinguish this leopardess, Astarte,[192] who is pure white (pure, spotless, without sin) from the spotted one which appears later as an enchanted form of Lilith. In his critical commentary, Greville MacDonald states: "the two leopardesses are conflicting aspects of Lilith's nature. The gentler, named Astarte, is kept caged and muzzled by the other, more terrible leopard, who is Lilith's intimate Self, proud and evil."[193] This explanation ignores Astarte's position as Mara's messenger, sent to protect and defend the helpless against Lilith.

Before he leaves, Vane sees Mara's shrouded face. The tears she sheds as the "Mother of Sorrows" establish her

[191]This is another reference to the Living water which quenches all thirst; the same water of which Eve spoke to Vane: "Your thirst must be greater before you can have what will quench it" (p.38).

[192]Astarte was a Phoenician goddess, a deity paralleling Aphrodite. There does not appear to be any further connection other than the name.

[193]centenary ed. of Lilith, p.372.

connection with the principle of repentance. They also extend a promise of hope.

> Her great gray eyes looked up to heaven; tears were flowing down her pale cheeks. She reminded me not a little of the sexton's wife, although the one looked as if she had not wept for thousands of years and the other as if she wept constantly behind the wrappings of her beautiful head. Yet something in the very eyes seemed to say, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."
>
> (p.108)

Having met Mara, and the Little Ones, Vane now feels a need for companionship, recognizing the barren selfishness of an existence which never enlarges itself in other lives. When he realizes his part in the vital unit of humanity, his past self, which avoided human company, becomes a source of wonder. His growing distaste for solitude is essential to Vane's gradual denial of self.

After the episodes concerning the skeletons, Vane receives more advice from Raven to guide his future actions. The straightforward advice is: "In this world, never trust a person who has once deceived you. Above all, never do anything such a one may ask you to do" (p.128). In answer to Vane's fear of forgetting, Raven gives this riddling comment: if Vane forgets, some evil that is good for him will follow; if he remembers, some evil that is not good for him will not follow.[194]

[194]Essentially this is an expression of Romans 8:28 ". . . all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."

Now searching for a way to help the Little Ones and to give his life meaning and purpose, Vane also longs for companionship. Finding the naked body of a woman--Lilith--apparently dead near a small river, he exerts all his energies to revive her. Greville MacDonald connects this hot river with the elements and the four spiritual dimensions.

> The river stands for the four spiritual dimensions, in fact, the elements of Earth, Air, Fire and Water. . . . It is elemental, substance-giving, not the cold Water of Life that Lilith took from the land. The metallic taste of the hot river stands for Earth, the heat of it for Fire, the river itself for Water: while the Air-element is known by the "bluish mist that rose from it, vanishing as it rose."[195]

Through his ministrations Vane strives for human contact and a sense of unity, although he still cannot distinguish good from evil. Realizing that existence of and for oneself restricts the possibilities for development which humanity offers, Vane begins to understand the principle of individuality in unity.

> I saw now that a man alone is but a being that may become a man--that he is but a need, and therefore a possibility. To be enough for himself, a being must be an eternal, self-existent worm! So superbly constituted, so simply complicate is man; he rises from and stands upon such a pedestal of lower physical organisms and spiritual structures, that no atmosphere will comfort or nourish his life, less divine than that offered by other souls; nowhere but in other lives can he breathe. Only by the reflex of other lives can he ripen his speciality, develop the idea of himself, the individuality that distinguishes him from every other. . . . A man to be perfect--complete, that is, in having reached the spiritual condition of persistent and universal growth, which is the mode wherein he inherits the infinitude of his Father--must have the education of a world of fellow-men.
>
> (pp.139-40)

[195] centenary ed. of Lilith, p.369.

Vane is theorizing about something he will later experience: the renewed, vitalized, growing self when joined in unity. A hold on self is undesirable and essentially destructive; individuality thrives only when it is not alone. This postulate underlies Lilith's destructive self-rule. MacDonald supports the Christian paradox that true and perfect freedom exists only when one has surrendered oneself wholeheartedly to God. Therefore, in his fantasy, MacDonald must achieve the surrender of both Lilith and Vane to the sleep which signifies death and rebirth (resurrection), and leads to true awakening within the mind and purpose of God. Their "salvation" rests upon this pivot. Each and every individual must ultimately experience this rebirth; according to MacDonald, all will eventually be saved--even the Shadow (Satan) will sleep.[196] One must surrender everything to sleep, awakening only when one has "forgotten enough to remember enough," i.e. forgotten self and remembered unity with the Absolute.

While caring for the woman, Vane is bitten repeatedly on the neck and arm. Although when Lilith awakes she tells Vane that a white leech caused the bites, we wonder, as Vane wonders, at her unexplained recovery. This is the first exhibition of Lilith's vampirism, which re-emerges when Vane follows her and

[196] Satan's sleep is inevitable, as we noted earlier. It accompanies the suggestion that those who have been the most rebellious will require the longest periods of sleep. Lilith learns that she and the Shadow will be "the last to wake in the morning of the universe" (p.302).

sleeps in her castle in Bulika. Many meanings and explanations for her vampirism are possible. In his discussion of Lilith as the archetypal "seccuba-anima," Reis asserts that the scene in Lilith's castle is a "rape scene" and that the vampirism represents that aspect of woman which robs man of his "bachelor freedom."[197] It is more important, however, to recognize that Lilith's "passion" is directed only towards herself. Thematically, the most obvious significance is Lilith draining, without remorse, the source of another's strength in order to maintain her own existence. Vane himself recognizes (p.172) that Lilith prolongs her life at the expense of his vitality. With this explanation, the significance of Lilith as a "leech" increases.

Three months after Vane finds her, Lilith revives, despising Vane's care and attention. Shuddering to learn that she has been bathed daily in the hot river,[198] Lilith cannot pardon the two wrongs Vane has done her: he has compelled her to live and put her to shame. Although Vane cannot comprehend his wrongdoing, we can conjecture that, to an immortal spirit like Lilith, death would be a welcome relief from her existence.[199] Lilith's use of the word "shame" is ambiguous: it

[197] Reis, p.118.

[198] Later the significance of running water in folklore as a power to destroy enchantment or as an obstacle to evil (e.g. Tam O'Shanter) is developed to explain Lilith's helpless position by this river (p.183). If we remember the connection of the river with the spiritual dimensions, Lilith's dismay is understandable.

[199] Lilith repeatedly asks for physical death, e.g. pp.287, 297.

is unlikely that she feels shame from a sense of modesty. Possibly Lilith regards her nakedness as a revelation of herself and is shamed by a restoration resulting from the water which dispels her powers of enchantment.

Vane follows Lilith to Bulika, despite the blows from her clenched left hand.[200] Believing that her beauty must indicate compassion and gratitude, Vane wishes to rouse her goodness.

> Had all my labor, all my despairing hope gone to redeem only ingratitude? 'No,' I answered myself; 'beauty must have a heart! However profoundly hidden, it must be there! . . . To rouse that heart were a better gift to her than the happiest life! It would be to give her a nobler, a higher life!'
>
> (p.149)

Vane subscribes to the neo-Platonic view that outward appearance reflects an inner reality. Classical and medieval aesthetic theory held that beauty and goodness could not be separated. In the nineteenth century, however, artists and writers were fascinated by the image of the beautiful evil woman.[201] Despite warnings, Vane's Faustian desire to learn more about Lilith drives him on, although he realizes the impossibility of friendship or love.

> But her presence had had a strange influence upon me, and in her presence I must resist, and at the same time analyze that influence! The seemingly inscrutable in her I would fain penetrate: to understand something of her mode of being would be to look into marvels such as imagination could never have suggested! In this I was too daring: a man must not, for knowledge, of his own will encounter temptation!
>
> (p.160)

[200] The action of an icecold blow emanating from the clenched hand appears again on p.151.

[201] See pp.5-7 of this thesis.

When Vane first sees the Shadow, he mistakes him for a man followed by the white leopardess. The Shadow, one of MacDonald's recurring archetypal symbols, has great significance in Lilith. Lacking prior knowledge of the Shadow, Vane observes him closely, feeling the effect of his presence.

> At a place where he had to cross a patch of moonlight, I saw that he cast no shadow, and was himself but a flat superficial shadow, of two dimensions. He was, nevertheless, an opaque shadow, for he not merely darkened any object on the other side of him, but rendered it, in fact, invisible. . . . the shadow seemed once to look at me, for I lost his profile, and saw for a second only a sharp upright line. That instant the wind found me and blew through me: I shuddered from head to foot, and my heart went from wall to wall of my bosom, like a pebble in a child's rattle.[202]
>
> (p.163)

The shadow, a complex and confusing symbol in MacDonald's fiction, acquires different meanings in different contexts. In Phantastes, the shadow which Anodos finds is "the maleficent part of him which destroys all it touches," and he works to rid himself of this curse blighting his perceptions.[203] Reis conjectures that its acquisition represents stubborn wilfulness and the "pessimism and cynical disillusionment" which destroys the pleasures of life; it is also connected with guilt and cowardice, and its removal comes with courage. He concludes that, "although its symbolic meanings are multifold, there is a subtle

[202] The Little One, Odu, echoes this reaction later,,saying that when the Shadow entered him it spread "blackness" and "hated . . . from inside me" (pp.261-62.

[203] Cf. Ursula LeGuin, A Wizard of Earthsea (Emeryville, Calif.: Parnassus, 1968) and the shadow which is the evil side of Ged.

unity among the significances of the Shadow; it comes to represent the complex relationships between guilt and innocence, humility and pride, courage and cowardice, living life and fleeing from it."[204] In her discussion of the "realization of the Shadow," M.-L. von Franz identifies it as a personification of a repressed part of the unconscious personality.

> The shadow is not the whole of the unconscious personality. It represents unknown or little-known attributes and qualities of the ego--aspects that mostly belong to the personal sphere and that could just as well be conscious. . . .
> When an individual makes an attempt to see his shadow, he becomes aware of (and often ashamed of) those qualities and impulses he denies in himself but can plainly see in other people. . . .[205]

This "dark side of self" implication is Wolff's prejudice in Lilith; he asserts that "the shadow, so far from carrying any of the symbolic or allegorical connotations that Anodos' shadow carries in Phantastes, seems to be no more than a devil, perhaps the devil himself."[206] I submit that the Shadow in Lilith carries archetypal significance of great intensity, and I agree with Louis MacNeice's judgement in Varieties of Parable that this is a "far greater shadow who stands to the whole of humanity as the earlier shadow stood to the hero of Phantastes."[207] His qualities of evil, fear and death have been suggested by his effect on Vane and the Little Ones. That we are meant to equate the Shadow with Satan is clearly indicated

[204] Reis, pp.92-93.

[205] Jung, p.174.

[206] Wolff, p.349. Italics mine.

[207] MacNeice, p.100.

by Adam's remarks, especially those concerning Lilith's association with him. Speaking of her escape from the Garden, Adam says:

> She poured out her blood to escape me, fled to the army of aliens, and soon had so ensnared the heart of the great Shadow, that he became her slave, wrought her will, and made her queen of Hell.
>
> (p.204)

Alone and uncertain, Vane questions the relation of the two leopardesses and the Shadow to the evil surrounding him, finally realizing that the white leopardess has good intentions. Her displays of ferocity are only for his protection. Although MacDonald exploits the appearance/reality theme in many ways, confusing the issue because it is a complicated one, the ultimate difference between good and evil always exists. Thus, although there are two similar leopardesses, only one is good, and similar food becomes differentiated according to its source.

Vane visits the princess' castle, despite the previous warning that there are "sounds in it at night as if the dead were trying to shriek, but could not open their mouths" (p.158). Lilith's sweet greeting puzzles Vane again: "Could such beauty as I saw, and such wickedness as I suspected, exist in the same person?" (p.177). Invited to bathe (usually a symbol of purification in MacDonald's fiction), Vane does so, but suspects the water of enchantment.

> Immediately my brain was filled with an odor strange and delicate, which yet I did not altogether like. It made me doubt the princess afresh: had she medicated it? had she enchanted it? was she in any way working on me unlawfully?
>
> (p.178)

Here again, MacDonald uses one symbol with differing meanings to reflect the power behind it. Echoing the Miltonic principle that evil may appear in attractive forms, MacDonald demonstrates that, in evil hands, the bath's purification and the Eucharist's spiritual nourishment (p.179) become sources of enchanted imprisonment.

Seeking to enslave Vane with her words, Lilith paints a tempting picture of immortality and power. He is not deceived by her offer of herself; while her talk of love "grown perfect" fascinates Vane, it does not ring true. At this time he learns of Lilith's proposed attack on the Little Ones before being stopped at the stream. Her use of the word "bounded" (p.181) reveals that the stream dissolved Lilith's powers of enchantment in leopardess form. Tempted by his vanity to believe Lilith's profession of love, Vane hears a warning roar from the white leopardess.

Attacked, bitten and blinded by Lilith while he sleeps, Vane searches to find her for his own protection.

> I must find her: in her presence I might protect myself; out of it I could not! I was a tame animal for her to feed upon; a human fountain for a thirst demoniac! She showed me favor the more easily to use me! My waking eyes did not fear her, but they would close, and she would come! Not seeing her, I felt her everywhere, for she might be anywhere--might even now be waiting me in some secret cavern of sleep! Only with my eyes upon her could I feel safe from her!
>
> (p.184)

In the "black hall" Vane sees skeletons and burrowing phantasms dancing a "confused dance" without order. Viewing these

actions later, with the princess behind each one, Vane realizes the significance of the hall: "I knew that in the black ellipsoid I had been in the brain of the princess!" (p.191).

As he approaches the cage where the unmoving spotted leopardess is chained and muzzled (indicating a restrained potential for evil), Vane witnesses Lilith's transformation into animal form, a desperate struggle in which two "vastly differing forms, human and bestial, with entangled confusion of mingled bodies and limbs, writhed and wrestled in closest embrace" (p.186). Lilith, as the spotted leopardess, goes out to join the Shadow; the motionless body of the animal still remains in the cage.

The battle between the white and spotted leopardesses is essentially a contest between the powers of good and evil. Although the spotted leopardess is larger, the white one has more endurance; soon the spotted leopardess utters a "howl of agony, changing . . . into the long-drawn crescendo of a woman's uttermost wail" (p.187). Released, Lilith takes first human, then animal form in her flight. She does not concede the vistory, but she flees; Raven looks towards the day when Lilith will confess "her last hope gone."

In pity, Vane climbs the courtyard's centre tree to obtain Lilith a healing plant. Gradually developing the characteristics of a fountain, this tree forms a bridge between the two worlds, and Vane finds himself in the fountain on his own lawn

with Raven beside him.

Chapter XXVIII is Raven's commentary upon Vane's mistakes thus far in his effort to be of use and to make himself at home in the Otherworld. In effect, it is a lesson taught from Vane's own experiences which Raven helps him to interpret. Learning his error in leaving the Little Ones, Vane discovers that, because he forgot Raven's warning against distrusted persons, Lilith has entered this world in cat form to seek another route to the children.

The next scene marks a change in the novel's movement. To unmask the cat as Lilith, Raven reads sections of the poem in the half-book, which Vane records in the fragments his understanding has formed. The poem retells Lilith's story in MacDonald's strange and evocative poetic style. Although a definitive statement is impossible from the fragments,[208] apparently Adam first reads Lilith's words describing her creation--"All women, I, the woman,"--separate from Adam, capable of killing: "For I . . . could trammel brains and spine." Lilith wails at the reading; Adam continues with a description of her growing fear and despair outside the Garden, without her 'Queen-ship'.

> My past entire I knew, but not my now;
> I understood nor what I was, nor where;
> I knew what I had been: still on my brow
> I felt the touch of what no more was there!
> I was a fainting, dead, yet live Despair;
> A life that flouted life with mop and mow!
>
> (p.202)

[208] No critics have analyzed the poem to any degree.

Adam also reads verses recording Lilith's exchange of precious stones for the necessities of life; he discloses her fear of death--"Once I heard a cock / Lustily crow upon the hillock green / Over my coffin." The next verses, calculated to bring Lilith from her hiding place, describe the disintegration of her proud beauty despite her vain attempts to preserve it by mirrors reflecting the sun's light.[209]

'Fleeing cold whiteness, I would sit alone--
Not in the sun--I feared his bronzing light,
But in his radiance back around me thrown
By fulgent mirrors tempering his might;
Thus bathing in a moon-bath not too bright,
My skin I tinted slow to ivory tone.

'But now, all round was dark, dark all within!
My eyes not even gave out a phantom-flash;
My fingers sank in pulp through pulpy skin;
My body lay death-weltered in a mash
Of slimy horrors--'

(p.203)

Using the manuscript to prevent Lilith's escape by the chimney, Adam closes his reading with lines indicating Lilith's sorrow for her actions: in effect, a repentance.

'. . . Oh, had I lived the bodiless alone
And from defiling sense held safe my heart,
Then had I scaped the canker and the smart,
Scaped life-in-death, scaped misery's endless moan!'

(p.204)

All that will take place has been foretold and recorded in this ancient manuscript. The action suggests that Lilith's futile struggle is approaching its end; she will indeed come, at last, to repentance.[210]

[209]These are the mirrors which Lilith uses (p.254) to support her narcissism.

[210]This is not an absence of free-will--Lilith's actions are based on her power of choice--but the foreknowledge of God.

Having spoken to Lilith herself through the poem, Raven now tells Vane of her "Fall" through pride and rebellion.

> '. . . For her first thought was power; she counted it slavery to be one with me, and bear children for Him who gave her being. . . . Vilest of God's creatures, she lives by the blood and lives and souls of men. She consumes and slays, but is powerless to destroy as to create.'
>
> (pp.204-05)

Responding to Lilith's defiant claim of beauty and immortality, Raven indicates the spot of sin staining her side, draining her beauty. As he calls her to repentance,[211] Lilith gives "the cry of one from whom hope is vanishing" (p.207). Despite her refusal to submit, Adam foretells the eventual victory of Good:

> '. . . Good and not Evil is the Universe.[212] The battle between them may last for countless ages, but it must end: how will it fare with thee when Time has vanished in the dawn of the eternal morn? Repent, I beseech thee; repent, and be again an angel of God!'
>
> (p.207)

Evil must not only be destroyed; good must replace it.

> '. . . Annihilation itself is no death to evil. Only good where evil was, is evil dead. An evil thing must live its evil until it chooses to be good. That alone is the slaying of evil.'
>
> (p.212)

Vane discovers the mother-daughter relationship of Lilith

[211] This is one of the scenes in which Raven 'preaches' for MacDonald, delivering the sermon MacDonald wished to reach the widest congregation.

[212] This denies a Dualistic view of the universe, with two equal and independent powers, good and bad, fighting for control. MacDonald does not support Dualism; these powers are not equal. Cf. C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, pp.34-37 for a discussion of the flaws of Dualism.

and Lona, the threat Lona poses to her, and Lilith's plan to destroy the Little Ones by passing through the "world of the three dimensions." Raven admonishes Vane, anxious to return to the children, to go to Eve and to follow her directions, but Vane still doubts Raven's wisdom.

> His advice did not recommend itself: why haste to encounter measureless delay? If not to protect the children, why go at all? Alas, even now I believed him only enough to ask him questions, not to obey him!
>
> (p.210)

As Vane helplessly watches Lilith enter the Otherworld before them, he doubts further the necessity for Adam's sleep.

Vane has not yet accepted the order of sleep before action. Meeting the winged horse[213] he is to ride after sleeping at the cottage, his covetousness which destroyed the guiding light before re-emerges. Encouraged to break his promise to Adam by his longing to pursue Lilith and his infatuation with the horse, Vane has forgotten his wish to aid the Little Ones. Angered, Raven tells Vane that his foolish actions result from his refusal to sleep and his inherent 'deadness'. Heedless of Raven's warnings, Vane gallops away. It is to "failure" that he rides; Raven hopes: "May it be to humility!"

While rejoicing in power and pride on his mount, Vane's confidence wavers with the moon's rapid descent,[214] "rolling

[213] Perhaps Pegasus, the winged horse of Greek mythology, symbolizing the flight of the Imagination.

[214] Cf. Wolff, p.355 and the suggestion that the descent represents MacDonald's rapidly failing belief, again presuming that Lilith demonstrates a disintegrating faith.

like the nave of Fortune's wheel bowled by the gods" (p.219). Without the light of the moon, the horse, now a "helpless bulk," drops to the ground,[215] and Vane is again alone.

Tormented by a horde of cats, Mara's agents, Vane runs from their biting and scratching.[216] They direct him along the route that he followed in his previous journey. Awaking from sleep in the region of the Little Ones, Vane finds himself bound again by the Giants. Once more the children free him. During his absence, they have developed mentally and physically; they now cultivate friendships with the forest animals--again the concept of unity appears. MacDonald reintroduces the metamorphosis/repentance theme through the Little Ones' relationship with the caterpillar.

> Most of them would have nothing to do with a caterpillar, except watch it through its changes; but when at length it came from its retirement with wings, all would immediately address it as Sister Butterfly, congratulating it on its metamorphosis--for which they used a word that meant something like repentance--and evidently regarding it as something sacred.
>
> (p.231)

Perceiving Lona's power to direct him towards the good, Vane admits his love for her. "She drew my heart by what in

[215] This recalls MacDonald's plea for an educated imagination in his essay "The Imagination: Its Functions and Its Culture," Orts, pp.2-41, if we accept the winged horse as a symbol of this faculty.

[216] Cf. C.S. Lewis, The Horse and his Boy (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1954) for another use of this 'chase to safety' image. MacDonald uses it when Vane is bitten by the white leopardess (p.170) and when this animal snaps at the Little Ones in the forest (p.236).

me was likest herself, and I loved her as one who, grow to what perfection she might, could only become the more a child." (p.229).

Planning to fulfil the prediction of Lilith's death through the Little Ones,[217] the Bulikan woman with them cultivates their fighting skills. Her intentions are selfish, like those of all Bulikans: she will lead the children to the city, then escape to await the results. Lona and Vane accept her plan as destined to succeed in establishing a 'redeemed' and righteous nation. But Vane's personal ambition to rule a commercially successful Bulika with Lona influences his support; this echo of self-interest serves as a warning of impending doom to the mission.

The quest for water is put aside in favor of the Bulika expedition. Hesitant to approach the city with all the Little Ones, Vane surrenders to the woman's insistence that the mothers will respond to their children. Vane does not warn Lona about Lilith, and Lona's words that she would give her life to have her mother strike a foreboding note.

After the children are attacked by the inhabitants, Vane proposes a direct encounter with the princess in order to achieve victory; he envisions a change in Lilith.

[217] Reis, p.100 erroneously attributes this plan to Vane.

> Mother and daughter must meet: it might be that Lona's loveliness would take Lilith's heart by storm! if she threatened violence, I should be there between them! . . . I knew she was doomed: most likely it was decreed that her doom should now be brought to pass through us!
>
> (p.253)

Vane pictures himself as the agent of Lilith's defeat; he does not acknowledge that Lilith must herself repent.

Terrified by the waning of her powers, Lilith seeks reassurance and a mode of action by concentrating upon herself.

> Now what she called thinking required a clear consciousness of herself, not as she was, but as she chose to believe herself; and to aid her realisation of this consciousness, she had suspended, a little way from and above her, itself invisible in the darkness of the hall, a mirror[218] to receive the full sunlight reflected from her person. For the resulting vision of herself in the splendour of her beauty, she sat waiting the meridional sun. . . . the sun shone upon the princess, and for a few minutes she saw herself glorious. The vision passed, but she sat on.
>
> (p.254)

Lilith's special form of narcissism requires this reflection in the splendour of the noon sun but her beauty no longer girds her for action; her power and beauty are waning. As she sits, "waiting the sun to give her the joy of her own presence," she cannot see the Shadow (Satan), her attendant, until he leaves after seeing the growing spot on her side. His parting suggests that even the Prince of Darkness recognizes her approaching defeat.

When Lona comes, Lilith dashes her to the floor "with the

[218] Cf. the use of mirrors in Raven's poem (p.203) and the mirror as a mode of entry.

smile of a demoness." Afterward, she looks like a corpse with "her eyes alone alive."[219] Lona is dead; Lilith feels assured of her immortality. In intense sorrow, Vane carries Lona from the black hall: "I forgot the Little Ones, forgot the murdering princess, forgot the body in my arms, and wandered away, looking for my Lona" (p.257). It is left to the children to bind Lilith. Vane, in his disheartened condition, has lost all his hopes; all his expectations have been defeated. As Adam prophesied, Vane's ride has led to humility. With the Little Ones, Vane takes Lona and Lilith to Adam, humbling himself. Vane has neither the power to make Lilith repent nor the right to slay her.

On the way to Mara's "House of Bitterness" Vane twice suffers Lilith's vampirism: once intentionally to give her strength to reach Adam and once when Lilith attacks him. In imagery designed to remind us of the "screech owl" of Isaiah 34:14, Vane first sees the "jagged outline of a bat-like wing." Then Lilith comes upon him like "a cold wind with a burning sting." Striking her clenched hand, Vane refuses to give Lona to her or to loose her bonds.

At Mara's cottage Vane quiets the fears of the children, teaching them the lessons he has learned. After asserting that Mara is never unkind although she may cause hurt (in effect, that good may appear evil to the unenlightened), he urges

[219] Cf. the eyes of the dancers (P. 116).

that they be brave.

Receiving Lilith now that her hour has come, Mara strives to make her repent. Although the measures must be hard, the struggle is Lilith's alone. Here, in the House of Bitterness, Lilith's repentance begins as she struggles with her desire to exalt her own self. MacDonald presents vividly the destructive hold on self which keeps one from one's origin. The slavery which then exists under the deceptive guise of freedom separates Lilith from regenerative repentance. Invited to turn from evil, Lilith replies, "I will do as my Self pleases --as my Self desires" (p.277). Repeatedly asserting that she owns herself, she denies the suggestion of slavery to self. Lilith's self-centred view emphasizes the "I" of her own thoughts.

> 'So long as I feel myself what it pleases me to think myself, I care not. I am content to be to myself what I would be. What I choose to seem to myself makes me what I am. My own thought makes me me; my own thought of myself is me. Another shall not make me!'
>
> (p.278)

Claiming self-creation, and therefore self-rule, Lilith defies anyone to compel her to act against her will. Mara wishes to penetrate her will to reach its motivating force. This harmony with the creating will represents true freedom, not the slavery Lilith supposes. For, who "is a slave but her who cries, 'I am free,' yet cannot cease to exist!" (p.278).

C.S. Lewis describes repentance as "unlearning all the self-conceit and self-will that we have been training ourselves

into for thousands of years. It means killing yourself, undergoing a kind of death."[220] We can note the prominence of "self" in this definition and compare it to Lilith's wilful pride in her own actions. Lewis also describes evil as a "parasite" borrowing and inverting the powers of good; Lilith, in desiring to achieve freedom, has similarly enslaved herself.[221]

> 'She alone is free who would make free; she loves not freedom who would enslave: she is herself a slave. Every life, every will, every heart that came within your ken, you have sought to subdue: you are the slave of every slave you have made--such a slave that you do not know it!--See your own self!'
>
> (p.279)

From the fire comes a "worm-thing . . . white-hot, vivid as incandescent silver, the live heart of essential fire" (p. 279). This image recalls MacDonald's "fire of God" as a purifying element. Through the black spot in Lilith's side, the worm reaches the "secret chamber" of her heart. Lilith's torment begins at the sight of her real self, "the good she is not, the evil she is" (p.280). Weeping, Lilith blames God, as her Creator, for her worthless condition. God can restore her to her original state, but Lilith will not be reborn. The water which arises in the house returns Lilith to the settle where she experiences the "strife of thought" both "accusing and excusing." Lilith's awareness has only reached the stage

[220] Lewis, Mere Christianity, p.46.

[221] Ibid, p.37. Cf. also Satan in Milton's Paradise Lost, whose actions are governed by a decision to oppose God in all things, and "out of good still to find means of evil" (Bk.I, l.165).

of self-loathing, not that of sorrow; this, however, is "a step in the way home." Still refusing to surrender herself, Lilith reaches one extreme of her suffering in a darkness of ultimate negation which Vane too experiences.[222]

> Gradually my soul grew aware of an invisible darkness, a something more terrible than aught that had yet made itself felt. A horrible Nothingness, a Negation positive infolded her: the border of its being that was yet no being, touched me, and for one ghastly instant I seemed alone with Death Absolute! It was not the absence of everything I felt, but the presence of Nothing. (p.283)

Unable to face such a state, Lilith cries out for life, whatever the suffering involved; by doing so, she defeats the engulfing darkness.

Repentance is not yet complete. In "pitiful humility," Lilith asks to go into the wilderness, but Mara perceives that Lilith's submission is neither real nor feigned: it wavers between the two. Echoing Raven's statement that only good in the place of evil signifies the death of that evil, Mara encourages Lilith to release whatever is within her clenched hand, opening it with "persistent effort." Defiantly, Lilith turns to herself for strength. Crying, "I will yet be mistress of myself! I am still what I have always known myself --queen of Hell," (p.285), Lilith casts herself back into the "Life in Death--life dead, yet existent": back into her own hell.

[222] Cf. the negative, purposeless freedom found often in the dream literature of Kafka and in the negative existentialism of Sartre which presents the absurdity of decision. Freedom cannot be exercised in a vacuum; it requires an atmosphere of encounter and choice.

Vane also feels the withdrawal of the life force; the "lamp of life and the eternal fire seemed dying together" (p.285). He experiences a reflection of Lilith's misery; he is with her but not in the outer darkness alienating her from all other beings. Lilith now knows living death.

> It was not merely that life had ceased in her, but that she was consciously a dead thing. She had killed her life, and was dead--and she knew it. . . . She was what God could not have created. She had usurped beyond her share in self-creation, and her part had undone His! She saw now what she had made, and behold, it was not good! She was as a conscious corpse, whose coffin would never come to pieces, never set her free! Her bodily eyes stood wide open, as if gazing into the heart of horror essential--her own indestructible evil. Her right hand also was now clenched--upon existent Nothing--her inheritance!
>
> (pp.286-87)

At this point MacDonald makes a serious literary error, spoiling his effect by the addition of the remark "But with God all things are possible: He can save even the rich!" (p.287). It seems evident that MacDonald is striving for a Biblical parallel: God can bring the rich, self-centred and intent on worldly possessions, to Himself, even as He can bring Lilith to repentance. Although Wolff considers this remark as evidence of MacDonald's hatred for the rich,[223] it is no more than an artistic gaffe.

Acknowledging her slavery, Lilith desires physical death, but she must die "out of death into life." Following genuine tears of repentance, she knows a new beginning and the healing rebirth of the waters.

[223]Wolff, p.361.

> It [the wind] flowed and flowed about Lilith, rippling the unknown, upwaking sea of her life eternal; rippling and to ripple it, until at length she who had been but as a weed cast on the dry sandy shore to wither, should know herself an inlet of the everlasting ocean, henceforth to flow into her for ever, and ebb no more. . . . For in the skirts of the wind had come the rain--the soft rain that heals . . . .
>
> (p.288)

Her full repentance requires Adam's help to open the hand "shut upon something that is not hers" (p.291). Lilith's clenched left hand, which is eventually cut off by Adam, is never opened to our view. In this way, MacDonald sustains one of the most thought-provoking symbols in the book. But the action of clenching suggests the attempt to keep something for oneself, so we may presume that in Lilith's hand lies the very essence of her being, her soul, which she has maintained for herself for so long. Its 'leftness' implies rejection by Christ,[224] and, if we associate left with the west, also recalls that direction as the seat of sin and darkness and the abode of demons.[225]

Before Adam, Lilith stands ashamed but unsubmissive. MacDonald is realistically portraying the process of repentance: it is not easily accomplished and may involve repeated setbacks, requiring a continuous "killing of self." When warned of Lilith's duplicity, Mara answers:

[224] George Ferguson, Signs & Symbols in Christian Art (New York: Oxford Univ. Press,) 1959), p.22.

[225] Ibid, p.25.

> 'But you will open to her the mirror of the Law of Liberty,[226] mother, that she may go into it, and abide in it! She consents to open her hand and restore: will not the great Father restore her to inheritance with His other children?'
>
> (p.296)

Lilith fears restoration to the Father, wishing to return whence she came, but Adam affirms that she must indeed find her origin in God. Having sought death as an escape from Him, Lilith now learns that Death and the "Life that dwells in Death" lead to God.

The impending sleep which will join her to God frightens Lilith, who fears the immortal cold of the chamber and the presence of th Shadow outside. Eve reassures her that all is well, not only for the Little Ones but also for the slain Lona. Wolff claims an inconsistency in MacDonald's life/death symbolism when Lilith is blamed for Lona's death; his criticism reveals his mis-reading of MacDonald's theme.

> Here we see the pitfalls that inconsistency digs. If death *per se* is a good thing, then why should Lilith be blamed for killing Lona at all? But, in fact, the killing of the daughter by the mother is, and was intended to be, a shocking crime, and one for which Lilith is blamed. But at the very moment when Lilith killed her, we are now told, Lona had been a long time dead, in the special sense of wakening into life. But this too is puzzling: the way to wake into life is to sleep in the cemetery [the chamber], and Lona has never yet done this. MacDonald has muddled his own symbols and clouded the entire cosmology that he has been trying to construct.[227]

[226] Rather than the "confused" image that Wolff suggests (p.362), this reference to the "mirror of the Law of Liberty" has Scriptural roots in James 1:23-25.

[227] Wolff, p.363.

Throughout Lilith the death of selfish desires and physical death are separated; Lilith has killed Lona physically, but Lona is already spiritually reborn. Lilith's crime is the killing of Lona for the maintenance, not the destruction, of self. Also, sleeping "in the cemetery" (Wolff's term for Adam's chamber) is the only way for such self-centred persons as Lilith and Vane to enter this spiritual life; it is possible that Lona, as Adam's daughter, may have slept earlier, as Adam, Eve, and Mara have.

Lilith understands neither this death nor her death of slavery to the Shadow's will. Adam is alive when she thought him dead long ago; now he says he is "more alive than you know, or are able to understand. I was scarce alive when first you knew me. Now I have slept, and am awake; I am dead, and live indeed!" (p.301).

On her couch, Lilith's clenched hand prevents sleep from coming; she must yield what is not hers "to give or to withhold." Her struggles are in vain because the hand has grown closed. After Adam severs it with the sword given him by the angel at the gate (of the Garden),[228] she sleeps and at her feet Astarte is laid. This sleep offers atonement for all past evils and enmities.

Asking pardon for his cowardice and self-confidence, Vane longs to sleep in the chamber, saying, "I give myself

[228] Implied. Cf. Genesis 3:24.

up. I am sick of myself" (p.305). One task remains before he sleeps; he must bury Lilith's severed hand in the desert to release the imprisoned waters. Again he receives warning instructions:

> But give good heed, and carry the hand with care. Never lay it down, in what place of seeming safety soever; let nothing touch it; stop nor turn aside for any attempt to bar your way; never look behind you; speak to no one, answer no one, walk straight on.
>
> (p.306)

On this task which, unlike previous ones, he did not set himself, Vane is "left to no chance." He is shown each step of the way, guided by the sound of the underground waters. Tempted by the appearance of phantom forms of Lilith, Mara and the Shadow to disobey his instructions, Vane does not weaken. Having learned that strict obedience is necessary, he neither falters nor speaks. When he meets and passes the Shadow, Vane perceives the first signs of rebirth: "a soft wind like the first breath of a new-born spring greeted me, and before me arose the dawn" (p.309). Burying the hand in the appointed place, the weary Vane falls asleep as the river begins to rise again.

Returning to Adam, Vane encounters an old man denied entrance to the "house of death." In conversation, Vane demonstrates the knowledge he has gained through his experiences and his understanding of the life in death. The aged man desires death because he is old; he does not understand that the death in Eve's cottage is but a richer life. Because

he comes for the wrong reason, he is turned away. Vane tries to explain:

> 'I may not be old enough to desire to die, but I am young enough to desire to live indeed! Therefore I go now to learn if she will at length take me in. You wish to die because you do not care to live: she will not open her door to you, for no one can die who does not long to live.'
>
> (p.312)

Grieving that the old man has not learned to die, Vane directs him to Mara, the Lady of Sorrow. Having himself "wept many tears," Vane can now offer counsel.

At last reaching Eve's cottage, Vane feels intense loneliness and desolation before sleeping in the chamber. Alone, he cannot avert the stirrings of doubt. Although he follows a vision of Lona to the chamber, Vane cannot sleep until he has eaten; again he shares the bread and wine of the Eucharist with Adam, Eve and Mara, Vane's spiritual family.

Adam and Eve tell Vane that they knew he was coming; indeed, "every creature must one night yield himself and lie down" for he is "made for liberty." Without concern for hours or years, each one will find his "true time" and come. Forgetting everything, Vane sleeps at last.

Robert Wolff thinks <u>Lilith</u> should have ended here, because he considers the remainder of the novel an attempt by MacDonald to "extricate himself from the mechanical problem" of awakening Vane, the narrator, in order to tell the story.[229]

[229] Wolff, p.265.

However, I suggest that Vane's dreams and his confusion at the end are an integral part of the construction of Lilith. They contribute to the fantasy's resonance and suggestiveness by returning to the dream symbolism and by emphasizing MacDonald's thesis that all are in the process of becoming, growing towards perfection.

Dreaming, Vane grows "aware of existence," less conscious of himself and more conscious of bliss; "I had neither made it nor prayed for it: it was mine in virtue of existence! and existence was mine in virtue of a Will that dwelt in mine" (p.319). He is "in the heart of God" with "redemption drawing nigh," atoning for past sins and wrongs because of the love which now possesses him.

In blackness, Vane imagines that he awakes, alone. Seeing the paths of his previous journey, he rejoices that, by setting the river free, he has given his life meaning. Through that action, he has done something to make himself "at home." After resolving to search for those with whom he slept, Vane learns that he is still asleep. Confusing as this seems to us, the deceptiveness of the dream state and waking truth are equally puzzling to Vane. Adam promises that when he is "quite dead," he will dream no false dream; even while asleep, Vane is being educated. In a speech echoing MacDonald's own longing for the perfecting of man's awareness, Adam reassures Vane that he will e[illegible]ally know the truth.

> That which thou seest not, and never didst see save in a glass darkly--230 . . . that thou canst not but doubt, and art blameless in doubting until thou seest it face to face, when thou wilt no longer be able to doubt it. But to him who has once seen even a shadow only of the truth, and, even but hoping he has seen it when it is present no longer, tries to obey it--to him the real vision, the Truth himself will come, and depart no more, but abide with him forever.
>
> (p.326)

By applying the lessons of past experiences to future ones, he will learn that Truth "is all in all; and the truth of things lies, at once hidden and revealed, in their seeming" (p.326).

Vane also dreams an interruption of sleep, believing himself back in his own world after seeking to wake and flee his dream. However, we remember Raven's earlier statement (p.39) that no one can wake of himself. At length Vane does awake with surety.

> The fourth night I seemed to fall asleep, and that night woke indeed. I opened my eyes and knew, although all was dark around me, that I lay in the house of death, and that every moment since there I fell asleep I had been dreaming, and now first was awake.
>
> (p.330)

Eve informs Vane that he has just begun to wake and live: since his dying is over, he has only "to live" with all his might to become stronger in this new spiritual life. "Those who will not die, die many times, die constantly, keep dying deeper, never have done dying; here all is upwardness and love and gladness" (p.331).

[230]Cf. I Corinthians 13:12.

Before his departure, Vane sees his teachers in full glory:

> Ere I could say, 'Lo, they change!' Adam and Eve stood before me the angels of the resurrection, and Mara was the Magdalene with them at the sepulchre. The countenance of Adam was like lightning, and Eve held a napkin[231] that flung flakes of splendour about the place.
>
> (pp.333-34)

In the sun's coming and in the singing of the golden cock Vane receives a foretaste of the resurrection morn.

> Far away--as in the heart of an aeonian silence, I heard the clear jubilant outcry of the golden throat. It hurled defiance at death and the dark; sang infinite hope, and coming calm. It was the "expectation of the creature" finding at last a voice; the cry of a chaos that would be a kingdom!
>
> (p.334)

The Little Ones wake at the sound. This is not the final resurrection morning, as Wolff misinterprets it;[232] it is the first morning of their freedom and rebirth after death (p.338).[233] Lilith has not yet awakened, nor has the Shadow slept; nevertheless, the cock heralds approaching victory.

On the journey home to the Father, Vane experiences an enriched, fuller sense of life, perceiving "that life and truth were one; that life mere and pure is in itself bliss; that where being is not bliss, it is not life, but life-in-

[231] the napkin about Christ's head in the tomb. See John 20:7.

[232] Wolff, p.370-71.

[233] MacDonald may be suggesting the first resurrection of Revelation 20:5, 6.

death" (p.338). Surpassing his old knowledge, Vane sees nature with new eyes, to discover the unity of all things.[234]

> I walked on the new earth, under the new heaven, and found them the same as the old, save that now they opened their minds to me, and I saw into them. Now the soul of everything I met came out to greet me and make friends with me, telling me we came from the same, and meant the same. I was going to him, they said, with whom they always were, and whom they always meant; . . .
>
> (p.340)

Everywhere nature rejoices in the glory of God.

As the company approaches the Heavenly City,[235] Vane is dazzled by its splendours. In imagery directly related to the account of St. John the Divine,[236] MacDonald describes heaven in terms of sparkling gems and brilliant colours. From the image of Revelation 22:1 of "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," MacDonald develops his River of Life flowing over flowers and down steps descending from the mountain's peak. While they ascend the stairs, angels remove the Little Ones; Vane and Lona continue towards the top and the river's source.

[234]This is further evidence of the German romanticist philosophy of absolute unity and the concept of the revelation of the divine in nature.

[235]Wolff (p.369) doubts that this is indeed heaven, posing rhetorical questions to support his view that MacDonald has lost all control of his symbolic imagery.

[236]Cf. Revelation 21:18-21.

> . . . through the openings between the rocks, the river came billowing out. On their top I could dimly discern what seemed three or four great steps of a stair, disappearing in a cloud white as snow; and as it were a grand old chair, the throne of the Ancient of Days. Over and under and between those steps issued, plenteously, uneasingly newborn, the river of the water of life.
>
> (p.347)

Entering the folds of the cloud, Vane feels the touch, presumably, of his Father.

> A hand, warm and strong, laid hold of mine, and drew me to a little door with a golden lock. The door opened; the hand let mine go, and pushed me gently through. I turned quickly, and saw the board of a large book in the act of closing behind me. I stood alone in my library.
>
> (p.348)

Separated from Lona, Vane does not seek re-entry to the Otherworld; he was sent back by God and now waits for fulfilment. This is comparable to the experience of the mystic who, having penetrated to the divine and achieved momentary flashes of spiritual insight, must return to a lower level of experience and await final fulfilment. "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come" (p.350).[237] Doubting sometimes, questioning the reality of his last waking, Vane still believes that his dreams arise from a source greater than himself.[238] He is not the frustrated and disillusioned character Wolff would have him;[239] he has "not

[237] Psalm 14:14.

[238] Cf. the close relationship between fantasy and hope indicated by Harvey Cox, The Feast of Fools: a Theological Essay on Festivity and Fantasy (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1969), p.8.

[239] Wolff, pp.370-71.

been the sport of a false vision." For when "a man dreams his own dream, he is the sport of his dream; when Another gives it him, the Other is able to fulfil it" (p.350).

Now Vane reflects on his past experiences, allowing his partial understanding to suggest unities he does not as yet comprehend. Although he has progressed, perfection lies ahead in his final "waking" into unity with the divine. For this he is willing to wait because, at the time of that union, dreams of life will be true and living realities.

> But when I wake into that life which, as a mother her child, carries this life in its bosom, I shall know that I wake, and shall doubt no more.
> I wait; asleep or awake, I wait.
> Novalis says, "Our life is no dream, but it should and will perhaps become one."
>
> (p.351)

We have examined the characters and events through which MacDonald has conveyed his message of repentance and spiritual evolution. Adam has functioned as the spokesman for MacDonald's theme. Our attention has focused upon the gradual changes in Lilith and Vane, showing the progress from self-centredness, despite regressions, toward unity with the divine. Throughout Lilith, MacDonald has used symbolic and archetypal images calculated to arouse the desired emotional response in his readers and to direct them in their own search for God. Because he has embodied his message in the experiences and errors of an ordinary character like Vane, who learns from his own actions and from Lilith's struggle, the reader is educated

spiritually while his emotions are stirred by evocative and skilfully manipulated images. Through Vane's fulfilment of his assigned heroic quest, and his mystical experiences, he has progressed along the path towards the divine; he now awaits, with hope, the final union.

Conclusion

Our concern in this thesis has been to establish the integral connection between the basic Jewish myth of Lilith and MacDonald's imaginative and original fantasy, and thereby to display it as a logical and coherent development of the theological issues of repentance and spiritual growth.

We have examined the myth as it has emerged in tradition and the various elements of its historical development which influenced MacDonald's treatment. With this background, we have seen that the major addition of Lilith's repentance was crucial to MacDonald's own use of the myth in his fantasy. An examination of Vane's development through the novel reveals that MacDonald's addition to the myth was necessary in order to present a picture of repentance and spiritual evolution for all mankind.

It is this emphasis upon the Lilith myth as essential to the structure which was absent from critical examinations of MacDonald's work. Scholarship has centred upon technical analysis and the nature of MacDonald's achievement in the fantastic genre, and upon psychoanalytic interpretations and the tracing of sources. While much of such critical analysis is beneficial to an examination of Lilith, criticism has largely ignored the message MacDonald wished to present and his method of presentation. Our intention has been to confirm

or debate such critical judgements in the light of MacDonald's use of the myth. Rather than aimless ambiguity and undirected structure, Lilith displays a tightly organized construction, connecting the Jewish myth with the education of Vane both thematically and structurally, and justifies the presence of images which superficially appear unrelated. MacDonald shows a consistent duality in his framework--the development of Lilith and Vane, the two worlds between which Vane passes, and the antithetical imagery of dark and light, good and evil.

We have examined those influences upon MacDonald's fantasy which contributed most directly to the technical and thematic structure of Lilith. The concepts of nature and man's relationship to the divine, and the symbolic imagery, transmitted from the German romanticists and such Christian mystics as Jacob Boehme, shaped MacDonald's presentation directly. The emphasis upon physical evolution by Darwin afforded MacDonald with an evident parallel for his doctrine of spiritual progress. He objected to Calvinism because it imposed restrictions which limited this spiritual development. MacDonald's use of such influences shows his concern with the problems and issues of his age as well as his ability to benefit from the past and from those interested in the human condition and man's destiny.

We have discussed the mystic style and literary techniques MacDonald used to shape his message. His imagery reflects his message; it conforms to antithetical patterns paralleling the

opposing forces of good and evil, using familiar life/death, light/dark symbolism. Always conscious of his theme, he strove to embody it in images and symbols which would move the reader emotionally as well as intellectually, and his images are repeated and embellished to create resonance and suggestiveness. MacDonald deliberately maintains an ambiguous symbolic interpretation. Although his images are repeated, they do not form a 'code'; they have no algebraic equivalents. Certain symbols, such as the bath, the Eucharist and the leopardesses, may suggest a consistent interpretation, but MacDonald manipulates their similarities to reveal the underlying opposition of good and evil.

As a work of art, Lilith does display certain stylistic flaws: MacDonald's language tends toward sentimentality, especially when he is creating child characters, and he occasionally destroys artistic effect by concentrating too heavily upon his message, as when he detracts from Lilith's struggle by commenting upon the spiritual condition of the rich. Nevertheless, MacDonald's style asserts his position as an artist. His gift for vivid and compelling description is illustrated by the skeleton battle and dance; the use of poetic details and accurate symbolic images provides a rich texture in his work; and he enriches his own imaginative structures from varied and multiple sources while retaining his individuality.

When evaluating Lilith's didactic value, we must realize that MacDonald had a definite view of his purpose and responsibility in writing this fantasy. It was his answer to a recognized need in contemporary society, an attempt to provide a firm spiritual foundation in the tumult surrounding himself and his fellow Victorians. MacDonald used his artistic ability to make his message as effective as possible; he couched his theme in a compelling and evocative style that effected the reader's edification through an identification with the character of Vane and through witnessing the gradual awareness and transformation rather than continual and direct didactic reiteration. The didactic element is strong throughout Lilith; MacDonald is striving to educate the reader concerning the spiritual nature of man and his ultimate destiny. It is an effective didactic work primarily because MacDonald's strong faith and conviction ring sure throughout. His beliefs were fully formulated; MacDonald was confident that the theories he expressed reflected man's hopeless condition without God and held out the promise of progressive spiritual development toward the divine.

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